

# KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

## KNOX LIFE

June 2026





## Six Challenges that are not really about Solar Power

### **The First Challenge - determination**

The Australian superannuation company that holds the money I was required to invest (as a condition of my service in the Uniting Church - 2005-2010) told me, when I turned 60, that I could apply for 10% of my investment to be released to me annually. Feeling that this was an opportunity to set myself up for a more financially sustainable retirement by buying solar panels, I applied for the release. I then spent two years arguing with a company that raised problem after problem about the release of the funds. I got the feeling that they were working hard not to give me any money at all. Finally, I succeeded in getting the money. I think this was the most grubby, greedy, deliberately unhelpful organisation I've ever had the displeasure of dealing with. The first challenge is persevering in the face of greed and resistance from the big machine.

### **The Second Challenge - patience**

The solar panel company installed the panels on the roof. They tested the system, found that it was working, then turned it off again, pending an independent inspection by someone called Dave. I hoped that Dave would visit me before the long Easter break. He didn't. When he *did*, God bless him, he declared the system to be fine. The second challenge is waiting for what is almost (but not yet) ready.

### **The Third Challenge - adaptability**

Now that the panels are producing power during the day, I'm having to adjust how I use power. In previous times, I've tended to use power-consuming machines (dishwasher, clothes dryer, washing machine) at night, when my power company offered cheaper rates, I'm now working on using the appliances when the sun is shining and I'm not having to buy power. It takes much presence of mind to break the pattern of turning on the dishwasher before I go to bed. The third challenge requires (if gain is to be claimed) the disciplined refining of well-established patterns - learning new rhythms for the house.

### **The Fourth Challenge - perspective**

The system came with access to a website where I can see how much power I'm producing, how much I'm using directly, and how much I'm paying back to (or drawing from) the grid. It's easy to spend hours watching how the power is flowing - when I might be using my non-electric-power to be doing other rather more important things. God saving us from wasting time on silly details takes us through the fourth challenge.

### **The Fifth Challenge - concern for the "other"**

In a cost of living crisis, as I come to appreciate the savings that solar is winning for me, I'm aware that many households really needing lower power bills cannot afford to install solar. It's another instance of privileged people having access to improvements that less privileged people can't afford. How I might "agitate for change" in the realm of government subsidies? As Christ (whose preference for the poor is often acknowledged) whispers in my ear, am I up for the fifth challenge?

### **The Sixth Challenge - willingness to rest**

In Islam, reference is sometimes made to the concept of jihad, which means "struggle". In Judaism, the name "Israel" is said to come from the story of Jacob struggling against God. "Israel" is said to mean "struggled with God". In Christianity, there is story after story of Jesus struggling against resistance. The life of faith across the big three Abrahamic religions is broadly described as "rising to challenge". The sixth challenge, I think, is to imagine an existence when struggle is over, and the sun just shines!

". . . when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God," [Hebrews 10:12].

## **A Prayer**

God give us a fighting spirit for the times of resistance, patience for what is almost done, adaptability in times of change, freedom from distraction, passion for justice for the poor, and consolation through a vision of all things being completed in Christ.

Arohanui, Matthew

## **Church Council Notes**

While most Council meetings focus on the running of the parish, from time to time, we also spend time considering reports from the executive of the national church – the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCANZ) and giving feedback when decisions need to be made.

The General Assembly of the PCANZ meets every two years. At the 2025 meeting some alterations to the Book of Order were discussed. The Book of Order contains the rules and protocols of the national church; it can be a useful resource for parishes and presbyteries. The changes proposed this time related to procedures in response to issues which have arisen in recent years and, some minor changes in wording. More consultation with a local parish will be required at times when the viability of that parish is at risk and more support will be provided to congregations which struggle to appoint a new minister when there is a vacancy. The Knox Council supports the changes.

All the Easter services this year were particularly well attended. Matthew's thoughtful and moving services, complemented by Pete and Joyce Majendie's art installation, were very much appreciated.

Many years ago, a Mrs Cunningham made a generous bequest to Knox. The Session at that time decided to invest the money and to gift the interest each year to a local charity. This year Council decided that the Christchurch Charity Hospital should be the recipient of the \$2,000 interest from that fund.

For the first time Knox took part in Open Christchurch – a festival celebrating the architecture of Christchurch. Tours of the church and the Knox Centre were conducted by knowledgeable people and the festival was well publicised. It was estimated that about 200 people visited Knox.

Jean Brouwer  
Knox Church Council Clerk

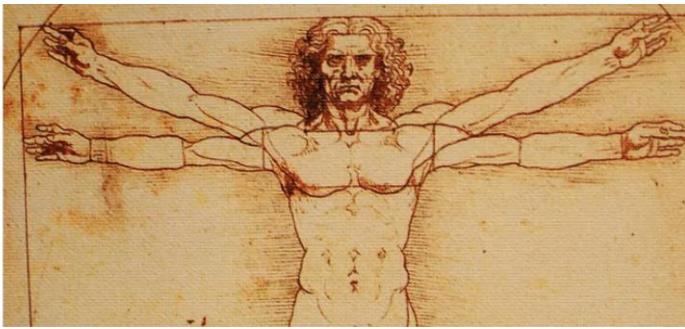
# COMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

## Services in June - Human Rights Month

### The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

#### Articles 1 and 2

Human beings are free and equal in dignity and rights - without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.



#### Articles 3 and 5

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.



7 June

#### EQUALITY AND EQUITY

**Genesis 2: 4-8**

With skill and tenderness, God makes the human being and puts him / her into a beautiful garden. Provision for human welfare is made. In our making of provision, what do we make of the claim that all people are equal? Does it call for equal treatment - or is there something else called "equity"? We celebrate communion.

14 June

#### DIGNITY AND THE FREEDOM TO EXIST

**Exodus 20: 1-6**

As God owns a great punishing jealousy, we wonder about our manifesting of God's image. Where does our anger come from, and how is it related to how we punish one another?

**Acts 3: 1-15**

After an act of healing, something the opposite of an act of punishing, Peter speaks of God raising the One whom the people had crucified. Is this a declaration of God's rejection of punishment?

## Article 13

Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.



## Article 16

Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.



21 June

## IMMIGRATION AND SAFETY

### Deuteronomy 24: 17-21

Special provision is made for the "alien" in the sharing of the harvest, and a key principle is remembering the experience of having been "alien" oneself.

### Philippians 2: 5-11, 3: 20-21

Paul speaks of a new citizenship for which we wait.

We watch a video of Ian McKellen delivering a piece of Shakespeare about turning away the refugee (mountainish inhumanity).

28 June

## ALL ABOUT MARRIAGE

### Genesis 21: 8-14

Abraham and Sarah work out how to push the boundaries of marriage to fix what they feel is missing - to the pain of Hagar and Ishmael. Who are the victims of the expectations of the institution of family and marriage?

### Matthew 22: 23-33

The Pharisees ask Jesus a bizarre question about to whom a multi-married woman would belong in heaven. It gives him opportunity to suggest that marriage is not a good way of framing heaven. Perhaps there is some other "way of being" that is more of the New Creation. What might it be?



**Good Friday Musicians**

## **From the Director of Music**

2026 is off to a busy start for music at Knox.

In January it was a pleasure to welcome Helen Charlton who led a vibrant and exciting workshop with the Knox Singers, working on vocal technique, projection and also giving several members some individual lessons. Thank you, Helen.

I'm very pleased that the Music Nurturing Fund is again on offer this year, thanks to the generous support of anonymous donors. Kahu Gray, bass, is once again the recipient of a scholarship and is a great asset to the choir. Kahu is studying voice at the University of Canterbury and is involved heavily in the musical life of the city.

The Singers have recently enjoyed tackling some large repertoire by Haydn, Malcolm Williamson (Palm Sunday) and Vaughan Williams' *Easter* from his Five Mystical Songs, with Kahu doing a splendid job as baritone soloist.

It's always wonderful to have visiting musicians come to Knox to enhance Sunday worship. On Good Friday, a quartet of singers gave very poignant and moving performances of music by Gibbons and Kenneth Leighton, and we also welcomed Vickie van Uden to play the Last Post at the ANZAC service on 26 April.

Looking ahead in the year, we will welcome Clarion, a group of professional female voices to sing on 14 June. Deborah Wai Kapohe will return to enhance the Matariki Service on 12 July with her traditional Maori instruments and powerful voice, and Nicola Holt (soprano) will join the choir with some of Chilcott's stunning Requiem in August.

As always, a huge thank you to the Knox Singers for their dedication and hard work, Bronwyn Wiltshire for her library work and to Russell Kent for filling in on the organ when I'm away.





## Book Table

Have you had a look lately at the book corner in the centre foyer? Or at the selection in the blue box in the church foyer on Sundays? This is a wee ongoing fundraising project for Knox.

\$3 per book or two for \$5. There might be something that appeals to you. And... what about those books at home that you really don't need to keep? All contributions welcome.

## Better taxes for a better future

Six Knox members attended a meeting recently that was aimed at mobilising support for changes to the tax system to make it fairer.

Taxes are to give the Government the resources to ensure that its citizens can live a life of dignity and sufficiency. Paying tax is a social investment.

However, current policy settings have led to increasing disparity of wealth and incremental impoverishment of large swaths of the population.

For example, the wealthiest families in New Zealand pay an effective tax rate of approximately 8.9 to 9.4% of their total economic income. This rate is less than half of the 20.2% effective tax rate paid by the average New Zealander, when factoring in income tax, GST and capital gains.

The election is coming soon and we believe that now is the time to make it clear to candidates and parties that they need to commit to reforming the tax system if they expect to become the next government.

The group "Better taxes for Better future" is going to show support for tax reform by people signing a pledge that states:

*"We are voting for political parties that commit to tax policies to ...*

*Generate the revenue we need to fund the things that matter,  
Not make cuts to public goods and services we all rely upon,  
Make sure the wealthiest pay their fair share and address the  
impact of tax on the least well off,  
Close gaps in tax on big corporates."*

You can find more information about the campaign at:  
<https://www.bettertaxes.nz/> and you can sign the pledge at  
[http://www.bettertaxes.nz/pledge?recruiter\\_id=31736](http://www.bettertaxes.nz/pledge?recruiter_id=31736)

We can also anticipate hearing about and then being able to support groups like the Canterbury Tax Reform Coalition.

One comment that a participant made at the meeting was "Tax is Love."

## **A little bit of support for Palestinians**

One of the ways that Palestinians are suffering comes from illegal Jewish settlements on Palestinian land in the West Bank. These settlements apparently use surveillance equipment supplied by Motorola. One action that we in New Zealand can take is to no longer invest in Motorola.

Our KiwiSaver scheme had a small investment in Motorola and, I expect along with others, we wrote to the Investment Manager and asked that our fund divest from Motorola. We did not get a reply. Subsequently we were asked to complete a survey about our bank and one of our comments was that we were disappointed that we did not receive the courtesy of a reply to this request.

We then received a phone call from our bank telling us they had reviewed the investment portfolio. As a result, the bank decided that it wasn't appropriate to have investment in Motorola and had divested.

Little people can have a bit of influence, even on an organisation as big and seemingly impersonal as a bank.

Linda and Norman



## On the ball

Have you ever said to someone, "Gosh, you're on the ball" meaning, "Of course you're absolutely correct."

On our recent travels to Perth WA, we found out where that expression comes from. We travelled by train from Perth down to Fremantle about half an hour south. There we visited the Round House, reputed to be the oldest public building in Western Australia. It was once a prison and there are great views from the top of the building, overlooking the harbour and then way out to the Indian Ocean. Flying high above the building are several flags and also a big black ball. This is a timeball and, like the one at Lyttelton, it drops at 1pm every day.

In the 19th century, timeballs dropping at a precise time allowed mariners to calibrate their chronometers and thus to calculate their longitude. Now that we have GPS, this is no longer needed but the tradition is continued. The timeball in Fremantle has the added excitement of a 4 pound cannon being fired at the same time. We watched the preparation for this and, of course, they don't actually use a cannon ball. Instead, they use blanks but it still makes a great bang!

We were told by the guide that in the old days, the captain would record the date and time in the ship's log and beside that would write "On the Ball", assuming the chronometer showed the correct time. If you google this expression, it will tell you that "on the ball" refers to various sports but I don't think that's anywhere near as romantic, so I'm going to stick to the first story.

The guide also told us that sometimes, depending on the wind, traces of the explosive from the cannon can get on to your clothes. If you happen to be going to the airport later in the day, as you walk through the electronic gate, you might make the bells ring. The guide said, "Don't worry, just say you've been at the Round House and they'll understand." Well, this is exactly what happened to Norman that evening at the airport. He was taken aside as they thought he might have been concealing explosives. Actually, they were very nice to him and they did understand when he told them where he'd been. I escaped as I'd changed my clothes before going to the airport.

Linda and Norman

# Growing old gracefully

I'm not as young as I used to be and I'm finding on these chilly mornings, it is a little more difficult to get out of my nice warm, snuggly bed. How lucky I am to have a nice warm, snuggly bed when so many of my friends are sleeping "rough", although I have heard that a human in an office somewhere has said all cats must abide indoors at night. I doubt that he said a radiator ought to be placed by the cat's bed and turned on when the said cat meows piteously like I do.



Yes, that's right. I'm an elderly cat called Possum and yes, I do look a bit like a possum in some lights. I have a pinkish/apricotish under-carriage and my fur is thick and smooth. Actually, I've had other name tags over the years but am quite happy to be called Possum, rhymes with Blossom. I've lived very comfortably with my present humans for about ten years however, my recollection is that life wasn't always so comfy and cosy.

In fact, there was a time in the dim distant past when I feared I might not see another sunrise.

Some nice people from the Cats Protection League rescued me on at least two occasions and offered me for adoption. One home was pleasant and lived in by people who were kind and caring but they had a big, boisterous dog! Being of a very shy and timid nature, I found his company overwhelming and very soon I became quite unwell. The next home was pretty awful - enough said - so back to the Cats Protection League.

Happily, my lucky star brought along a lady who said my mature age (no-one really knows just how old I am) was not a problem, nor the fact that I was shy and tended to hide under beds, especially if a stranger appeared at the door.

I'm treated kindly here but was curious one day when my lady said to the tall man "I think I should take Possum to the vet because I'm concerned about her fur balls." Vet?? What did that mean? Well, I soon found out. I was bundled into a plastic box with slots in the sides and taken for a short drive. My lady lifted me out of the box (I was desperately wanting to hide under a bed) then a man in a white coat talked softly while his fingers gently touched my fur. Oh! Not so bad after all. Then he tried to open my mouth (What?! I'm not a horse - the indignity of it). I heard a word like "abyss" and my lady saying she'd bring me back again. Well, when I saw the plastic box again, I hid and flatly refused to come out from under the bed. No number of promises, not even the rustle of a Temptations packet, would budge me.

Eventually, hunger got the better of me - after all I'm a creature of habit and dinner time is dinner time. No sooner had I walked into the kitchen, my lady picked me up and bundled me into that dreaded box. So back to the man in the white coat. Without really knowing what was happening, I woke up in my nice warm, snuggly bed, minus a tooth! It wasn't all bad. For several days I was given my favourite food (with plenty of gravy) - I even managed to eke out my convalescence for quite a long time by playing "Possum".

There was the time when I was about to go outside for my daily perambulations and to commune with nature but the huge tabby from beyond the high fence suddenly appeared on the other side of the cat flap. I was terrified!! Even the most soothing words, promises (even Temptations) couldn't convince me to leave the safety under the bed this time. My bladder (not my strongest feature) eventually let me down. Then to add insult to injury, my lady provided a litter tray for my use in the sunroom - kitty litter at my age! How demeaning is that?

Now and again, my lady and the tall man get in the car and drive away but haven't returned when it's my dinner time. However, that's not as woeful as it sounds. An old lady arrives at the door to feed me my favourite food (with gravy). She even brushes my fur and gives me chin and tummy rubs but I do miss my humans.

And now to really confuse the already confused issues, what has happened to daylight saving? My body clock tells me when to ask for food. After all, dinner time is dinner time but now I'm told; "You're too early, Possum." A girl just can't win!

Most sincerely, Possum (aka She of the Imperial Paw)

# Surprises from Overseas

**Bananas:** NZ must have the best imported bananas in the Western World. We could not find a decent one in any shop anywhere we went!

**GF/DF availability:** The best was in Italy, the home of pizza and pasta!

**NZ Wine:** To our surprise, on the menu in two tiny pubs in England was Richard's favourite wine, Wither Hills Sauvignon Blanc!

**Cigarettes:** Everywhere! And cigarette butts on the ground and people vaping as well.... UGH!!

**Haircuts:** Richard got a very smart cut in Rouen, France. Later, in England, he and his brother Stephen both got their hair cut in Holt, a village in North Norfolk. The Turkish barber also cleaned out their noses and ears! A painful experience never to be repeated! Meanwhile my sister-in-law Liz and I visited the very shop where my favourite author Elly Griffiths had held the launch of her latest book two days earlier!!

**Two Pride Parades** which Richard especially enjoyed. We happened to be in the right place at the right time for Sydney and Washington DC. In the morning of the same day in Washington there was also a gigantic parade right around the White House in support of Palestine.

**Pianos at train stations** throughout Britain and Europe: Have you seen the current TV series **The Piano**?



**Bikes in Germany** even have their own tyre pump on the footpath - although barely a crash helmet in sight. In Münster it was terrifying walking anywhere because the cyclists ride all over town.

# Watch where you walk!!

## Special Things on Footpaths in Europe

### Stolpersteine (“stumbling stones”)



Throughout Germany these brass plates have been installed on pavements in front of the last residences of people who were arrested and murdered by the Nazi regime. They show the victim's name, birth date, and fate, and serve as a reminder of the Holocaust. They have also been installed in over 31 countries.

1. In Europe, look out for magnificent drain covers. Spot the name and coat of arms of the city (this one is in Wuppertal).
2. World Heritage Site (this one is in Bordeaux).
3. And wait for the moment when the strawberry season starts and the stands open in Germany! We were sadly just a wee bit early.
4. Want to know the weather forecast? Look at the convenient screen (this one alerted the passerby to snow and ice in some parts of Germany).
5. Street musicians (these were opera singers in Dresden).
6. Fancy a snack? (Pfefferkuchen in Dresden – spice cookies).
7. Pedestrian crossings in Germany feature the beloved *Ampelmännchen* ('wee traffic light men'), a feature of the old East Germany, which have now been adopted nationally.
8. The film *Moana Two* was just as popular in Europe as in New Zealand.
9. Strange statues (this one is in Bonn).
10. Bicycle couriers (the orange boxes are attached in the front).

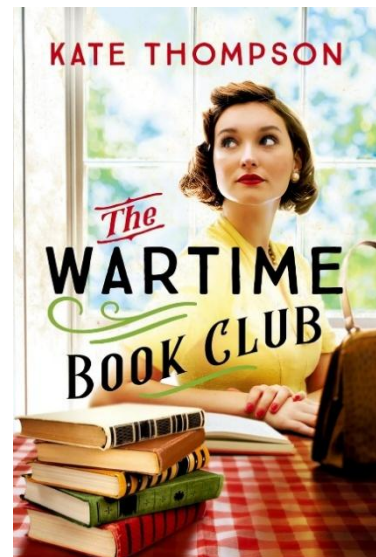
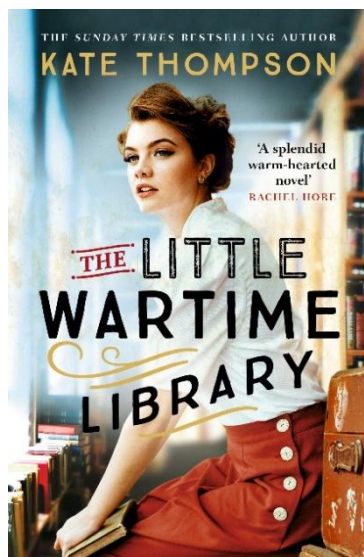
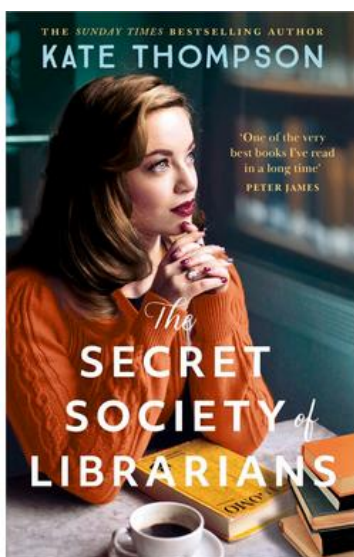
11. Two fake sheep stand outside an exclusive shop in the exclusive part of Hamburg, to let you know that they sell garments of pure wool.
12. The rubbish bins in Hamburg have cute slogans to encourage you to use them (this one says: "When I grow up I'll be a container.").
13. On a final note: the pink bin on the notorious Reeperbahn ("the world's most famous mile") the prostitution street of Hamburg. Its bilingual message: "Be nice!"



# Book Reviews

In a previous *Knox Life* I recommended the writer Kate Thompson, for her two recent books, **The Little Wartime Library** (2022) and **The Wartime Book Club** (2024). This is her pen name. Under her own name she is a highly experienced and respected journalist who has specialised in researching, interviewing and writing the memoirs of older people. (You may have met people doing similar work here in Christchurch).

Through Kate's love of books, she has a special admiration for the women who kept the people going during World War II. The first book focused on one of several libraries set up in the London Underground stations where thousands of people slept at night during the Blitz. The second book was about the highly courageous women who secretly delivered books and letters to people in Occupied Jersey. Her latest book, **The Secret Society of Librarians** (2026) has two storylines: one is of a mobile library in which a few brave librarians drove around London, issuing books during the day while the Blitz rained down at night. The parallel storyline is about the horrific and largely unknown story of the Holocaust in the Polish city of Łódź, told through the eyes of Dorothea, who ran an underground clandestine library often stocked with books left behind when the Jewish population were deported by the Nazis. For me, what makes these books so memorable is the fact that the empathetic presentation of the characters is based on the vast amount of research that the author has undergone before writing the novels. Each book ends with approximately 50 pages of historical notes and photographs including, in this latest one, a contemporary photograph of the gigantic library bus in which the young women drove around London!



And now a couple of very interesting memoirs about a lifestyle which has all but disappeared in Britain. **The Girl in the Painted Caravan** (2011) by Eva Petulengro and **Gypsy Girl** (2011) by Rosie McKinley. Both describe their life growing up in their Romany families. The first one has excellent photographs and both are well written.

Did you see the film **The Thursday Murder Club** (2025) about four people in a rest home in England? They meet each Thursday to solve old murders. Suddenly, a murder happens on their doorstep. In the course of solving it, they get to know each other even better. The film is based on the 2020 book by Richard Osman. So far, there are five books in the series which I read in two weeks!! They are funny, clever, interesting and with unexpected twists. I highly recommend them. The author is also working on another series, **We Solve Murders**.

Bronwyn W.



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 (Knox Presbyterian Church). 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.

**Knox Church Complex  
28 Bealey Avenue, Christchurch 8013**

**Ph: (03) 379 2456, Fax (03) 379 2466,**

**E: [office@knoxchurch.co.nz](mailto:office@knoxchurch.co.nz)**

**Office hours: Monday to Friday**

**9.00am-12.00pm**

**Minister: Rev. Dr. Matthew Jack**

**(03) 357 0111, E: [minister@knoxchurch.co.nz](mailto:minister@knoxchurch.co.nz)**

**Knox Council Clerk: Jean Brouwer:**

**[jean.brouwer@knoxchurch.co.nz](mailto:jean.brouwer@knoxchurch.co.nz)**

**Church Office Administrator: Lynda (03) 379 2456**

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

**On Facebook search: Knox Church Christchurch**