



# KNØX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

## Pastoral Letter not during lockdown

---

23 July, 2021

Kia Ora Knox Community,

In keeping with the post-lockdown commitment to keep the community in touch (particularly the part of the community that can't attend worship services on Sunday), here's the latest pastoral newsletter. The goal is to produce a newsletter in months when "Knox Life" isn't published.

The title "pastoral letter not during lockdown" reminds me that we, in Aotearoa New Zealand, are very fortunate to have lives that largely are Covid-unaffected. I have a brother who lives in Fiji, and many of us, no doubt, have family or friends living in more dangerous places than our home.

**Fish pictures:** On Sunday 25 July, our theme text was John's version of the feeding of the five thousand. John is the only gospel writer who mentions that the miracle began with the disciples finding a boy who had five barley loaves and two fish. The dramatic point was that five loaves and two fish was a meagre provision for such a large crowd. Looking for a picture to go on the front of the order of service, I found this wonderful picture of a boy, with a big rod, hauling in a tiny fish (meagre chance of providing for the world). A photo I didn't use on the front page, and one which I didn't use at all, are here:



A friend of mine, whom I met when we both were teaching English in China, is an avid fisher. He catches fish, takes photos, then puts them back into the river. I don't have too many friends captured on camera expressing so much joy in their hobbies.



**Sermon Practice:** Following some requests for some form of online worship like we had during lockdown, I offered "Sermon Practice" - at-home video recordings of sermons readied for preaching at Knox. Although we tried to publicise the videos, the feedback from Youtube suggested that very few people were viewing the sermons. So I stopped producing them. The existing sermons are still available online. You can find them by doing a Youtube search for "Sermon Practice" or "Knox Church Christchurch". If a huge wave of people watch them, I'll consider adding new sermons. (I'll keep an eye on the viewing statistics.)

**Internet matters, including online banking:** The Digital Inclusion Alliance Aotearoa, established in collaboration with the 20/20 Trust in 2018, is a registered charitable trust, seeking to help all New Zealanders access digital support (online and internet services that are becoming more important year by year). In recent times, as cheques have been phased out, and some parts of the country are losing physical banks in the neighbourhood (and even losing ATMs), the Alliance has been concerned to help people, including elderly people, access online banking services. Working closely with local libraries, one initiative is DORA (Digital-On-Road Access), a 33-year old school bus from Central Otago that was converted into a high tech digital learning centre for the Stepping UP training programme in 2012. DORA is doing a national tour, parking outside various local public libraries. DORA will be in various locations around Ōtauaahi Christchurch over the next few weeks. Times and locations have been posted on the noticeboard in the Knox Centre Lounge, along with phone numbers to ring if you would like to book a session with a tutor. If you can't get into Knox to see the schedule, give the office a call.

**Public Questions and Social Issues:** Knox has long had a record of engagement with social issues, and has made a significant contribution to public

debate about social issues. Recently, the national church has disestablished its Public Questions Committee, as has the national Methodist Church. At its last meeting, the Knox Council decided that it was time to form a working group at Knox to respond to public issues as they arise, making statements consistent with our mission statement and ethos. On Sunday morning I'm going to invite people to express interest in becoming part of a public questions group. We'll need to work out the governance of the group and how it works - but we think it's time for the Knox voice to contribute to public debate, particularly through the Parliamentary Select Committee process. Please watch this space.

**Covid Testing:** A couple of weeks ago, I woke up with a sore throat, and decided to stay in bed, rather than go into Knox for the Wednesday Bible Study. I was encouraged by a sensible person to get a Covid test - which I did. Because the testing station was a "thrown together" place, the process felt slightly eerie - but it was very simple. The people doing the testing were friendly and made everything easy. I suffered the slight inconvenience of having to isolate for 24-48 hours until my test result came through, but I was keen to stay in bed anyway. The result was negative, so I was able, quite quickly, to get back to work. It's a good reminder that we're in a time of vigilance. Please keep yourself in touch with what our circumstances require.



**The Organ Blower:** Pipe organs work by a blower blowing air through pipes tuned to different pitches and tones. Until very recently, the blower supplying air to the Knox organ was the original one installed in 1902. A very old machine, it also was smaller than ideal following various enlargements of the organ (extra pipes having been added over the years). Some time ago, the blower failed and was fixed. The fixers warned us, though, that it was not really up to the job anymore. John and Dame Ann Hercus made a generous donation, and many others topped up the donation, so we've been able to replace the blower with a new and larger one. Daniel says that the organ now feels like a totally different instrument. It no longer wheezes and can do whatever he needs it to do.

We're having a special morning tea (following a service with some special organ music) on 15 August. We're wanting to invite friends and neighbours to join us for this. Do spread the word!

Dear Knox Community

July 2021

The Annual Re-birthday Appeal is upon us again – in remembrance of the opening of our re-built church and the final addition of the beautiful stained glass window in 2018.

This year the Knox Council agreed to align the Re-birthday appeal with replacing the high lights in the church with LED lights. LEDs will be more efficient and long lasting and will not emit the irritating buzz that some of the current lights produce.

We hope you can support this project, in the 2021 Re-birthday Appeal.

Appeal forms are available at each entrance to the Church.

Thanks and regards  
Finance Committee, Knox Church

**A Fungus Farm:** I learned recently that the Christchurch City Council has opened a Fungus Farm in Richmond. It's a small park, down the end of Evelyn Couzins Avenue (opposite and down a bit from Avebury House), dedicated to mushrooms and toadstools. Council plans to hold public events where people can learn about foraging for mushrooms. Because the farm is brand new, there aren't many mushrooms there yet, but it's a curious and interesting place already. You might care to visit, or to keep an eye out for the foraging workshops. [https://newsline.ccc.govt.nz/news/story/fungi-farm-opens-in-otakaro-avon-river-corridor?fbclid=IwAR3ojPMUC\\_DCHLekY-mwHgfV2vb4qBkq1umSmgWWzx0eGQceeLt2Q1DM24U](https://newsline.ccc.govt.nz/news/story/fungi-farm-opens-in-otakaro-avon-river-corridor?fbclid=IwAR3ojPMUC_DCHLekY-mwHgfV2vb4qBkq1umSmgWWzx0eGQceeLt2Q1DM24U)

**Living in Ōtautahi Christchurch:** I decided a while ago to settle here by selling my house in Dunedin and buying here. Having let tenants live in the house for a while, I've just recently moved into my own home. It's been expensive, but is a great experience. I shared some reflections on "moving into a home" with the Fireside Group at a recent AGM. Of course I have a mortgage - and every time I visit the bank's website to view my balance, the bank insists on including information on the up-dated value of my house. In the nineteen months since I bought the quite modest half-million dollar house, it's reckoned to have increased in value by \$133,000. This acutally means nothing to me, since I want to live in it, rather than sell it. But it does makes me mindful that those not already on the property ladder are, in the last nineteen months, now \$133K further away from finding a home.

**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.

*Arohanui, Matthew.*