



KNØX CHURCH

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Pastoral Letter during Level 4

14 April, 2020

Kia Ora Knox Community,

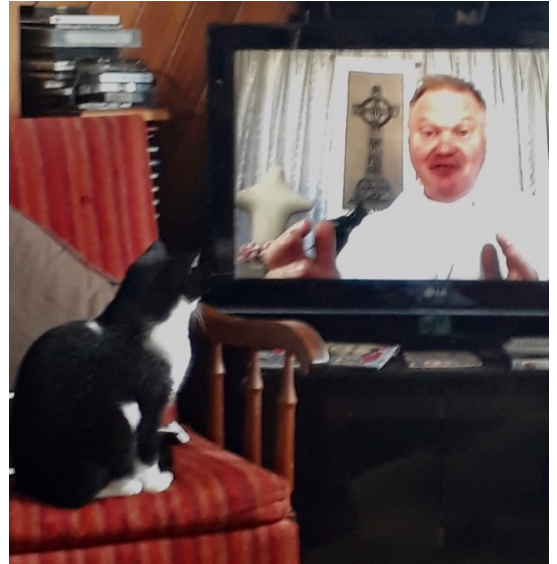
I hope that you're coping well within these new circumstances, and that you're keeping in touch with others, by phone, or other virtual channels. In times of isolation, we need one another! If you'd like to receive a phone call, ring Jane, at our office (379 2456), and she'll organize for someone to be in touch. We have lots of people willing to make calls - and to do shopping for you, if that's something you need.

While, sadly, we've now had five deaths nationally, it seems that in the last few days new cases of contraction of the Covid-19 virus are decreasing. The government now is encouraging us to make plans for coming out of Level four restrictions - and we'll make sure that our office is well prepared for any change in lock-down status. Government, also, however, is being very clear that emergence out from Level 4 does not mean the recommencing of public gatherings. It may still be some good long time before we are permitted to gather at Knox on a Sunday morning. In the meantime, we'll continue working online (with you-tube services), and sending sermons and orders of service to those who have no internet.

ONLINE SERVICES OF WORSHIP: We're continuing to post our Sunday services online. For the links to past services, go to the notices / services page of our website -

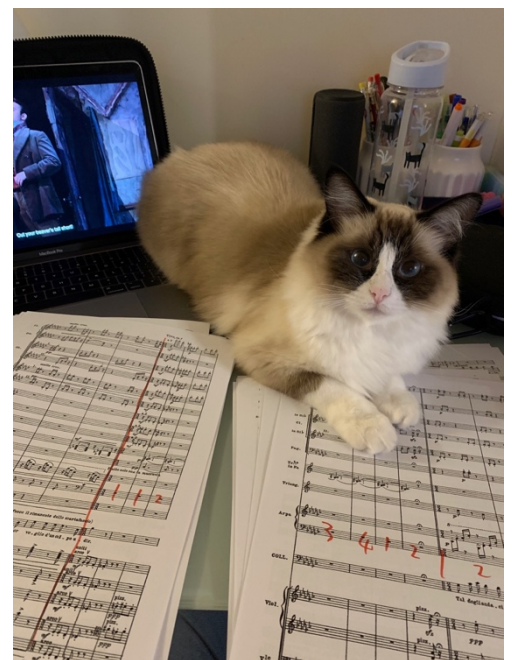
<http://www.knoxchurch.co.nz/oos.html>

You'll find video services for each Sunday from 22 March, and also Good Friday. When this Sunday's service is ready, Jane will send a link to you, and we'll post the order of service and printed sermon on the website. People seem to be appreciating the broadcast services - including one cat person (Mezzo), located in Merivale.



ON-GOING GOVERNANCE: On Wednesday this week (15 April), the Knox Council will convene via an email arrangement. All the usual reports will be presented, and opportunity will be given for councilors to ask questions before voting. The national office of PCANZ has sent notification as to how to conduct meetings remotely, and we're confident that this month's meeting will meet all requirements for remote but competent meeting. Probably, since most of our regular activities have been suspended, most of our reports will simply be for information, rather than for innovative decision.

MILA, THE CAT: Daniel spent lots of time, during the 48 hours of lockdown notice, recording lots of music for us. Because I had no chance of writing all prayers, sermons, and everything else within that time, Daniel and I agreed that he would record extra hymns (as I chose them, over time) at his home, and send me the video files for inclusion in our video services. So it was, that he recorded two hymns recently. People have appreciated his work, as ever, for these hymns. They also have enjoyed the presence, in the hymn footage, of Mila, the cat. Here's a picture of Mila checking out an opera score.



Mila only appears when she wants to, so her presence in future hymns is entirely up to her. She's a cat.

WALTER BRUEGGEMANN: A friend sent me an article by Walter Brueggeman, an American theologian, who's been thinking about suspended times, and waiting for the recommencement of life. You might appreciate the article.

<https://churchanew.org/blog/2020/04/06/brueggemann?fbclid=IwAR0B0FdKQsI0ku1iXDmWDBNgjiqqyktSJjaGbf-6xvNXcmT9TtIloK7gloU>

WHILE HUMANITY STAYS HOME, WHAT DOES CREATION

DO? On a recent walk around my block, I noticed how quiet it was. The main sound I heard was dry autumn leaves blowing against hard surfaces - just wind and leaves. From around the world we have news of animals noticing that things are quiet, and coming in to take a look. There are the goats of Wales, the bears of Canada, the native birds of Aotearoa.



A number of people have spoken to me about how they are finding solace in noticing how the natural order is continuing, and in some cases, flourishing, in

the time of our lockdown. There are reports that, with reduced use of vehicles, air quality is improving. These things cause people to wonder about what kind of a new normal we ought to seek after lockdown. Could we emerge as better "keepers of the earth"? Here is an email I received from Wolfgang, a lovely regular visitor to Knox:

Hi Matthew,

How are you in these special days? I hope and trust that you all at Knox Church are healthy and well.

Attached are a few photos and thoughts from Golden Bay ... The full moon rises in the



evening and the sun rises in the morning, birds singing in the air, the Tui finding some seeds in the tree and we enjoy the delicious and healthy fruits of the season, a seal calling her pup out at sea, the tide is coming and going perfectly, not too low and not too high, the earth is breathing peacefully and heavenly, the air is wonderful fresh and clean (even above some large cities) and it feels to me like God's creation is starting to heal during these quiet and humble days. Besides all troubles, there is so much to be grateful, joyful and also humbled for . . .

Is it possible, that we overlook the larger picture of a world coming to rest, a world coming to sleep and hopefully to heal? Had we not been way over-busy lately, for quite long actually? Had we not been running our 'engines' too long, too loud and too dirty, all around the world? Is this Corona caused Easter break not really a heavenly gift for the world to heal, for God's Creation to heal?

Why a corona, why putting the world on rest and do self-isolation exactly over Easter? At the beginning Jesus went into the desert, into self-isolation to talk with his Father and to resist the Temptations. Are we following and trying to do similar, are we using this break consciously similar? On Good Friday they had put a crown of thorns, kind of a



corona, onto his head. The events over Easter 2000 years ago finally were for the overwhelming purpose of cleansing and healing (the crown of thorns, the corona, was not the purpose, not the issue, it was just a part and at the beginning on the way to cleansing and healing). 2000 years ago it all had been overlooked and was not understood by most. This year a Corona had been put onto mankind all around the world and we might ask what could be our task during and after this prolonged Easter in self-isolation? Is there a greater purpose for cleansing and healing once again?

Some voices already proclaim to return and to reopen the economy and businesses as quickly as possible or as I read in the news for example to increase dairy to fill the losses in tourism. I wonder what comes out of it, I wonder whether we will continue or even increase our destructive, pollutive and unhealthy activities or whether we start to focus and build on our good, positive and healthy activities (I think it goes too far and be unrealistic anyway, but my thoughts even remembered what we had been told in Genesis, grains from the fields and fruits from the trees)? I wonder whether the world in general and New Zealand in particular might use this Corona Easter as an opportunity and start to live truly sustainable and in harmony with nature, which means in harmony with God's Creation and therefore with God Himself, and to build up a so-called green economy? "My Father ... may your will be done." Amen.

I wish you a peaceful, thoughtful and happy Easter.

SOME MUSICAL MOMENTS FROM KNOX: Daniel has posted some Knox musical moments onto Youtube, so you can watch them. More moment may come soon. Thank you, Daniel.

Arvo Pärt "Fratres" <https://youtu.be/T3-Xgl17J5A>
[knox singers 2019] MESSIAH <https://youtu.be/fCiOPY78p2Q>
[knox singers 2019] Pacem: a concert for peace <https://youtu.be/FPFwvzeMJNc>
Masters Conducting Recital 1 [Schubert, Mozart, Baird]
: <https://youtu.be/XzObyKpqz78>

DOMESTIC SAFETY: The crew and cast of "Wellington Paranormal" put together a light-hearted presentation around the issue of young people in lock-down. At the end of the presentation, though, there is a serious communication for those who may be experiencing domestic violence in lockdown.

Here's the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v69tzkdP1KE>

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT TEDDIES IN WINDOWS: Ken Booth has been walking around his neighbourhood, noticing the bears that have been placed in front windows. Here's his report:

http://www.knoxchurch.co.nz/data/news/202001010000_Going%20on%20a%20Bear%20Hunt.pdf

Arohanui,

Matthew.

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