

Knox News

December 2020 to February 2021

Number 323

Dear
Friends,

There is a public debate about the chapel space in the new hospital. It was initially presented in the *Otago Daily Times* as a debate between the Christian community and the people responsible for the hospital design. It quickly emerged that the debate was actually within the Christian community itself. The hospital chaplaincy Trust, led ably by Knox's Dr Stephen Packer, has been involved in the planning; but several ministers, including Presbyterians, do not support its approach.

Knox does. Our Church Council wrote a letter to express our confidence in the Trust and its leadership to work with others to find a satisfactory design.

The issue is how best to design a space that enables people to pray. In the present hospital there is a large chapel and offices for chaplains. In the new hospital, a proposal is that there be a smaller space to be used by different faiths. The *ODT* article led to several letters to the editor which reflected diverse understandings of how Christians should relate to other faiths. Miroslav Volf of Yale Divinity School provides some good theological thinking on the relationship between faiths, drawing on his experience of Serbian-Bosnian war, and what that said of the relationship between Muslims and Christians.

At Knox, we are fortunate to be visited by people of other faiths, including Muslim people, wishing to express solidarity or to learn more about Christian ritual..



After the Christchurch murders last year, we were among churches that reached out in support of Muslim communities.

I have visited Christian communities in places like Sri Lanka and Indonesia where Buddhists and Muslims have put their lives on the line to protect Christians, sometimes after a long history of violence. Christian communities have done the same. Peace has gradually emerged.

In my view, the church in New Zealand has a responsibility to ensure that people of other faiths are able to practise their faith safely. Where people of diverse faiths work together it can be a wonderful witness to a secular nation. Mutual respect enables good listening. Such interaction asks us as Christians to reflect more about *what* we believe and *why*.

Personally, I am much more concerned with a widespread lack of understanding of the dynamic of faith than I am about sharing space with other faiths.

As we move into Advent and Christmas, may the Christ of peace continue to influence us to be peace-makers with others.

Shalom, As-salamu alaykum, Kia tau te rangimarie!

Kerry

Council Report



Advent is once again upon us. No one doubts we have had a rather surreal year which has been filled with anxiety, a degree of nervousness and challenges. The coronavirus has disrupted all our lives. And yet, we have had some sense of normalcy and things to celebrate at Knox

We can celebrate that:

- during the lockdown Knox continued to be part of our lives and the lives of many others through our online services
- we had the talents and gifts within our midst to use the technology and teach others to use it
- we challenged ourselves by holding a congregational meeting via ZOOM in order to call as Associate Minister
- Rev Dr Jordan Redding accepted our call to be an associate minister at Knox for a period of three years
- we welcome new people to our community including those in the children's choir and their parents/whanau
- we give thanks to those who have offered to assist in many ways in the life of Knox and thank those who have chosen to step back for a period or move to do other tasks

I am sure there is a lot more we can celebrate and will celebrate over the next year.

At our most recent Council meeting, we thanked **David Crerar** and **Warren Jowett** for their collective wisdom and valuable contributions to Council as they stepped down from their roles after six years of dedicated service. At this 'changing of the guard' Council meeting, we also welcomed **Alisha Jefferis, Jamie Marra, Patsy Mason and Jody Takimoana**, our newest members who were inducted formally at the 29 November service (*see more, pg 4*). We will start our work in earnest in January when we hold a Retreat to plan the ensuring year.

As Christmas approaches, I invite us all to consider what it means for each of us to follow Jesus, born "unto us" so long ago in far away Judea. It is my hope that we can see beyond the bright tinsel and commercialisation of the season, and embrace the true meaning of the coming of this Prince of Peace.

Have a wonderful Christmas, everyone, and may the New Year be one of Hope, Love, Peace and Joy.

Yours in Christ,

Alison Tait

Council Clerk

Deacons' Court Report

Deacons' Court of Knox Church has farewelled two long-standing members.

Lindsay Miller retired at the October meeting after a period of leave due to ill health, and **Chris Bloore** retired at the Church AGM, although he has left open the possibility of returning after a year. Both Lindsay and Chris have worked tirelessly for Knox and their expertise and willingness to paint, direct, create, invent and repair will be sadly missed. They leave enormous shoes to fill.

Deacons' Court has oversight of the finances and property of Knox Church. It is a team, a cohesive group of deacons who, by respectful discussion and consensus, endeavour to find solutions to matters in these domains. We each have different skills and interests, the sum of which makes Deacons' Court work successfully. We also have a pool of institutional knowledge including what schemes have been tried both successfully and less successfully, which tradespeople have been employed and hence know the building complex, and whom to ask for advice. There are nine deacons at the present time: **Tony Haslam, Suzanne Bishop, Lee Somerville, Geoff Swift, Paul Crack, Phillipa Crack and Liz Miller**, plus two appointed representatives from Church Council including our minister Kerry.

The major work of Deacons' Court is undertaken by two committees, the Finance Committee, chaired by Tony Haslam, and the Property and Grounds Committee. Both Lindsay and Chris suffered major health issues in their time as property convener. It is not a requirement of the responsibility of

this position to be the "fix-it" person. The ongoing responsibilities of the Property and Grounds Committee are therefore now spread more widely among all members, each of whom takes responsibility for one



area, e.g., Phillipa Crack is responsible for the gardens, with Lee Somerville assisting her. The chairperson of Deacons' Court facilitates this structure. **Les Carse** is employed on a part-time basis as the church's Facilities Officer.

The **Knox Apartment** has now been let and tenants have moved in. Deacons Court and the Knox Community are immensely grateful to project manager Paul Crack. He was assisted in large part by Chris Bloore and Phillipa Crack, and on Saturdays by other deacons, with some time also given by Knox member **Hugh Forsyth**. The apartment will be an important part of the Knox's financial wellbeing.

If you are interested in joining the team, please contact **Suzanne Bishop**, the Clerk of Deacons' Court. Future projects include resurfacing the Stuart Hall floor, putting a kitchen in the Matheson Room, reorganising the Halls basement, as well as continuing general maintenance.

Liz Miller
Chair, Deacons' Court

New Church Council Members ...



Alisha Jefferis

Alisha was born in South Canterbury and brought up in a Pentecostal church. She became a leader in the church's youth group and undertook two mission-based trips overseas, working in Moria refugee camp in Greece. Aware of the harmful structures in place there, she began to rethink about what a Christian life means when it is paired with social justice.

She decided to study social work and is currently completing her second year at the University of Otago. She sees social work as an extension of her faith values of justice and equality and her faith as a constant journey of questioning and learning. To Alisha, living authentically in her faith and following Jesus is about pairing justice with lived experience and this is enacted through developing a relationship with God, with people and the environment.

Alisha and her husband Ollie Alexander joined Knox at the beginning of 2020 and have become part of the weekly Young Adults group. She is also involved in the Student Christian Movement at the university.

Patsy Mason

Patsy was born in Christchurch where she gained "a traditionally solid background in the local Presbyterian church and a good affirming education at Avonside Girls' High School." This included a strong sporting experience. She moved to Wellington to work in scientific research, studying the Sciences part-time. On being offered a job as a Medical Technologist at Dunedin Hospital she then spent the next 45 years working alternately at the hospital or in university research.

Patsy is a mother and grandmother, now semi-retired and teaching swimming part-time. For a number of years, she offered her home to university and polytechnic students, some from New Zealand and others from the Pacific Islands. She is well known at Knox as a Bible Reader, Welcoming Team leader, morning tea host and organiser of Eating Together. She is currently on the Quarantine Island Committee.

Patsy's faith is founded on "God is Love" or "God is Caring" as shown in the teachings of Jesus.



Jody Takimoana

Born in Auckland and then living in a number of different towns, Jody completed his schooling in Cromwell then trained as a Regular Force Cadet at Waiouru Military Camp with the New Zealand Defence Force. There, he qualified as both a chef and as a physical training instructor.

While continuing his full-time career in the NZ Army, Jody completed qualifications relating to adult teaching, management, sport and exercise and coaching. More recently he gained a post-graduate qualification in secondary education.

Jody currently works at the Otago Polytechnic with a team focusing on Maori success. He has a philosophy of inclusive decision making and working with others to achieve desired goals. He believes that failure should not define who one is but be seen as the true gateway to personal achievement. Whanau and friends are important to Jody, who has been a rugby trainer and is now a coach. Jody feels his spiritual belief and Christian faith have become more evident in his life over the past six years. He and his wife Sonja have been part of Knox since coming to live in Dunedin.

New Church Council Members

Jamie Marra

Jamie hails from British Columbia, Canada, and arrived in New Zealand with her husband Carlo in July 2016. She has recently completed her degree at the University of Otago and graduates in Dentistry this December. She has been appointed to a position at Dunedin Hospital.

Jamie has a particular interest in the provision of dental care for disadvantaged and low socio-economic patients, particularly new migrants, and recently helped to organise and run a free clinic which patients claimed had transformed their lives and restored confidence in people who had not visited a dentist for many years.

Jamie was baptised in 2013 and has been worshipping at Knox, with Carlo and their daughters Maia and Ana Sofia, for the past year. They have felt at home here. Jamie has particularly appreciated attending a Knox home group, with its insightful theological discussion and weekly scriptural study.



Barry Kelk, Chaplain ('Rev') to John McGlashan College, reflects on college life in 2020

Covid-19 brought some opportunities this year at John McGlashan College. Twenty of our chapel services including Easter and ANZAC Day, both 'high days' in our chapel calendar, were online. Statistics show, as in Knox's online season, that many more people got to engage with our school family and the gospel message. So much so that we will look seriously at continuing to offer this service. Our boarding families in particular have asked for this as many of them live in places that no longer have a church presence, such as rural Southland.

Another opportunity was our online teaching. Our boarders were able to have the best of all worlds: mum's home cooking, a familiar bed, jobs on the farm *and* an education. It was not unusual to find a lad late for 'class' as he'd been out drafting sheep or the like.

All the while I was getting upskilled in filming, editing, production and transmission. Teachers were getting creative about teaching and caring from a distance. Our weekly pastoral care meeting of the deans, counsellor, headmaster and Rev still met online and kept an eye on everyone, staff included.

So that's the positive spin done, but we all really missed physical proximity. We all missed being in

our sacred space (The Chapel). We really missed singing and assemblies and weekly awards.

John McGlashan is in good heart, however. We have inducted next year's intakes at both Year 7 and Year 9 and we are blessed that in New Zealand we are able to gather for prize-givings and leavers' services. Our 30 plus international students who won't get home this summer are being well cared at school and have a South Island road trip organised for them. ††



Finding Hope in a Time of Upheaval

Peg Pfab is a retired Presbyterian minister from Portland, Oregon. She and husband Mike Houge traveled to Dunedin to visit their daughter and family in March, just before lock down, and decided to stay in NZ until pandemic conditions improved in the US. They have joined the Knox community for their time here.

I was asked if I would write an article responding to two questions: how it feels being in New Zealand at a time of great upheaval in my home country (the USA) during the election and following weeks; and where a person of faith finds strength and hope, despite the fractured nature of American society.

The first part is the easiest to answer.

I feel so fortunate to be here in a sane and compassionate country where people still, on the whole, are willing to sacrifice some individual comforts for the good of the whole.

Frankly, I feel a bit of “survivor’s guilt”. I have escaped the relentless, in-your-face hostility of the last months of this presidential campaign – where everything, even a simple act of wearing a face mask is politicised and opponents are humiliated and demonised. In that atmosphere, which has torn apart families, friendships, churches and neighborhoods, it is very hard to remain calm and compassionate.

Before I arrived in NZ in mid-March, I found myself falling easily into negative thought patterns, even though I knew those patterns were destructive for an individual or a nation. Here I have definitely felt calmer, but also powerless and isolated from meaningful action. I could, and did, vote,

but it felt detached; although had I been at home I would not have been canvassing or marching anyway because of the pandemic.

The second question about faith and maintaining hope, pushes me to more deeply reflect about the state of my own

soul. I wish I could say that I resisted the temptation to sometimes feel depressed, despondent and hopeless, especially on the night of the election when it seemed the current administration would be in the White House again.

I have long felt that the United States is on its

downward journey as a world leader; that due to unbridled capitalism, arrogance, systemic racism and an anti-science attitude, we had sown the seeds of our own destruction. I realise all nations and/or empires eventually fade away. But my profound concern was/is that we will destroy the environment and fracture already fragile global connections in our downward spiral. And I was convinced that another four years of this administration would hasten that destruction.

But even in my deepest cynicism, I am brought back to the hope that the Spirit of Creation and Love is always here, no matter how hidden it may seem. I am inspired and humbled by the many people and

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communities that have historically resisted the urge to allow hatred and bitterness to define them:

First Nations people, Holocaust survivors, refugees from war-torn countries, immigrants at the border of the US. I don't feel in any way equal to them, but they give me inspiration.



Following the election, I see many people in the US struggling to heal and build bridges. I see Biden supporters relieved, but (mostly) resisting the temptation to gloat. I see some Trump supporters willing to work with Democrats.

I have to believe and trust that the values of many good people will prevail. It will not be an easy road. There will be anger, grief, hostility and frustration still. This is where people of faith (of whatever tradition) and humanists are called upon for courageous and plodding love.

By "courageous love" I mean overcoming a desire for revenge and building bridges even when it would be easier to ignore people with whom we disagree. By "plodding love" I mean the ongoing, unglamorous work of listening, connecting, working on policies

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that are good for all people and the environment.

In the US, we need to deal with the great divide that this election has exposed; the yearning to be heard and respected by ALL people; the systemic racism at the core of

our country's history; the fears of many that are aroused by even talking about that racism.

Healing in the US will not be easy or fast or even inevitable, but I believe that the call to people of faith is to do our best as individuals and as

interfaith communities.

The Spirit is pushing, pulling and compelling us toward a time of justice and peace. We will probably never see the promise of that vision fulfilled...but the health of our souls demands that we continue to work toward it.††



And Building Bridges in Aotearoa:

Robyn McPhail ministered to rural parishes for over 30 years. Here, Robyn shares her insights into a life of farming and faith, and the worrying divide between rural and urban NZ. She calls for us to learn each others' "heart language" if we are to overcome years of hurt and misunderstanding. It's a divide, she says, that has also fractured the Church..



For me, the sense of a divide between rural and urban goes back to childhood, on a sheep farm in Eastern Southland. When our townie cousins came to visit, we had them on about the things they didn't know about

farming and they in turn would have us on about being country bumpkins.

I loved it when I moved to the city for university, escaping the "close-knit" (read: they know what you're up to) world that I didn't completely fit into, but I took my country-ness with me, wearing gumboots to lectures on days when the walk down the hill through the Gardens was rather muddy.

By the time I got into church ministry, I seem to have been known as standing in both worlds.

Harvest Field asked me to write an article in the late 80s on the issue of attitudes between rural and urban. From what I recall, what was needed was to get to know one another. We had been operating on a sense of "judge us before you know us" and it works both ways.

This is still the case: we do not understand each other and we do not realise the impact this has.

So, let's be interested in the other, rural or urban, and consider life on the other side to be worthwhile.

Our Land Story

Our McPhail great-grandfather was the first of our family to farm in this country. James first worked for a farmer at Becks and in 1875 won a ballot for land in the Waikaka Valley. His employer sent him off with a bag of wheat in the springtime, which he sowed and then returned to Becks. In the autumn, he returned south, arriving in the dark: he walked out into the paddock and felt the wheat crop surrounding him as high as his chest. We were told that he slept soundly that night.

In the early 1900s, he bought land up the hill from there for my grandfather. A portion of it had been over-cropped for wheat and oats, using up all the natural fertility, and it took decades of careful farming for the fertility to return. Lime in the 1930s was a big step in soil health and balance.



Our Dad took over in the late 40s, continuing the kaupapa of land care and animal husbandry. Every animal mattered: one year we called each lamb we helped in any way "a fine \$4"! He had a seven-year rotation

for rejuvenating paddocks, growing winter feed for two years, then a rich mix of grasses of which the weaned lambs got to enjoy first taste. The flush of grass growth in late spring/early summer was made into hay for winter feed.

One of Dad's key land care decisions was based on a gut feeling: don't drain the swamp paddock. He felt it had a purpose in just being there.

My brother took over in the early 70s and the hardest time was the 1980s as commodity markets collapsed and Rogernomics ruled. They survived and continued to do good work. Tree planting, for shelter and for biodiversity, has been something of a passion, including setting aside a gully area for replanting natives. As was required, they fenced the creek. Reticulated stock water was finally available by then, with no need for access to any waterways.

Regarding run off, the main concern is sediment and any superphosphate that attaches to it if it rains before the super is absorbed. The best filtration system is the wide strip of grass on each side of the creek ("riparian" strips).

This generation's approach to land care is even more acutely responsive to situations as they arise. Weather conditions can require stock to be shifted more frequently, e.g. when it is wet, to avoid damage to the soil, therefore the pasture, and to the health of the sheep.



I know I am biased, but my assessment is that this patch of the good earth is looked after by genuine kaitiaki. My father lived his faith in how he farmed and he expressed it in terms of practical Christianity.

This patch of the good earth is looked after by genuine kaitiaki. My father lived his faith in how he farmed...

Rural Ministry

I stayed with rural parishes for all the 32 years on the job – Alexandra Clyde Lauder Union, St John's Methven, and Kaeo-Kerikeri Union. There was a purpose to it, part stubbornness and part justice-focus. A stubborn refusal to see rural churches, or small churches generally, as lesser.

With changing times, there was a growing imbalance between rural and urban, with rural churches and communities feeling more and more in the outfields. There was a role in being out there and being a "voice for the voiceless".

The post WW2 urban drift has continued apace, with decision-making at the centre dominated by urban/metropolitan perspectives.

The PCANZ has itself been a perfect example of this, perfectly disenfranchising for country congregations. The decision to base General Assembly representation on the size of congregations exacerbated the already reduced rural voice based on the cost of sending a commissioner to the national meeting.

Ecumenical networking has been our means to nurture rural churches, help them see their value, and identify their distinctive purpose in their local communities and for the good of the land.

Sharing stories of lament and stories of hope, rural churches have encouraged one another and learnt, not to measure ourselves against urban churches, but to see our viability in terms of having a mission in the community and a will to get on with it.

We are there to serve the community and, when we gather as church, to speak about faith in relation to life with the land. For what connects rural churches in NZ is our direct or indirect dependence on the land.

Another key aspect is neighbourhood relationships: in the country you cannot choose who you relate to. You need your neighbours, and therefore

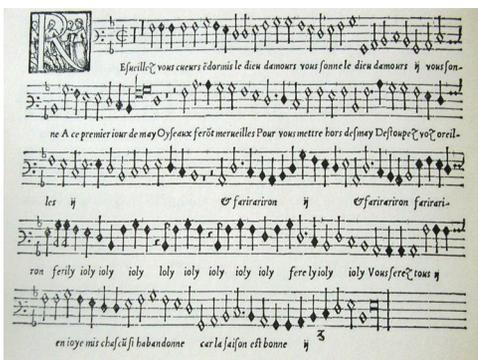
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Music to his ears: the hidden life of Chris Bloore

You might know Chris Bloore as Saint Chris of Knox, the ever-present Mr Fix-It who always seems to be beavering away behind the scenes so that broken things are mended, lights and wires are replaced, microphones work, and myriad other jobs are done.

But what you might not know is that behind the demeanour of the engineer, lies the soul of an early medieval monk – or at least, the aesthetic sensibility of one. Chris loves early music. And by early music, we mean stuff that harkens back even before Gregorian Chant (though he loves that, too).

“I can see the music algebraically,” he says. “I like the construction of the music; it follows rules.” Thomas Tallis, he of 1505 to 1585, is “at the *modern end* of the spectrum I enjoy.” Tallis’ masterpiece *Spem in alium* (“Hope in Any Other”, c.1570) exemplifies what appeals to Chris about early music. Describing it sends him into rhapsodies: “It’s a 40-part motet for eight choirs of five voices each. And yet Tallis manages to get 40 parts to *sound* like 40 parts, not just a wall of sound. He has to weave it all together, so that by the end, the suspense is phenomenal!” And when he says he “just loves the pentatonic scale”, you believe him. For those, like me, who are pretty ignorant of these things, the



pentatonic scale has five notes per octave, as opposed to the modern major/minor scale of seven notes per octave. That means that early musicians, before Bach say, had fewer notes to play with it.

“Bach came up with a musical system defining the frequency of notes that they thought would



make for a more pleasing sound. So, in very early music, players play with a very limited palette.” It’s exactly that “austerity” of sound that Chris finds appealing. “I also admire the skill these musicians had, because the more rules that hem you in, the more creative you have to be.” (Which is why Chris cannot abide free-form jazz: too loose and undisciplined.)

After the limited musical range of the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries, he says, Bach must have “blown people’s minds when they first heard him! The richness of the music! He’s got all the technique (of the early musicians), and has all his ducks in a row, and then, Boom! It’s just staggering.”

Perhaps it’s not surprising that a man whose last purchased pop record was Gene Pitney (!) should wax lyrical about the astringent beauty of medieval music. Chris also grew up in a rather unusual household, for the 1960s heyday of the Beatles, having never listened to pop radio stations, only Radio New Zealand’s Concert Programme.

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Farming and faith, *continued from page 9*

to be on friendly terms. Overall, life for country people is constantly about living with the variables – the weather, the government, the markets... These are people who have to live by faith, whether they use the language for it or not.

That is, whakapono and whakawhanaungatanga, faith and building relationships, the very qualities at the centre of life for the friends I made among the Ngapuhi nui tonu. It is what I grew up with and has been there at the heart of the churches I have worked with.

Being “Bilingual”

In Northland, working with Maori, I discovered the concept of “heart language”, the reo that enables you to speak from the heart and express yourself clearly and genuinely.

I believe the rural perspective is like that. We can talk “urban” and discuss issues in the terms used

by politicians and city-based interest groups. But when it comes to subjects such as sustainable land use, we need to be able to speak in our own language to express clearly the farming relationship with the land and the dependence upon it and its well-being for our livelihoods.

On the other hand, the reluctance I sense among urban dwellers to learn “rural language” sometimes mirrors the resistance to learning te reo Maori: “If they can speak English, why does anyone need to speak Maori?”

Fluent bilingualism, urban and rural, is needed now more than ever. We need good conversations -- really listening to one another -- rather than arguments and government action by decree if farming is to be truly sustainable in terms of the livelihood for the people and the health and well-being for the land.††

Music to his ears, *continued from page 10*

“Mum and Dad members of the World Record Society, and LPs would arrive every month.”

Mainly classical, of course, but also, strangely, a host of Gilbert and Sullivan.

“We had three copies of the libretti so we could

all sing along,” Chris’s eyes alight with the memory. “I was once forced to go see “My Fair Lady” and I loathed it. It was so contrived, but G & S was clever, it was libellous, wicked, social commentary.”

Moving into the slightly more into the

modern era, Chris admits to liking Rachmaninoff, notably his First Symphony, mainly because it’s so gloomy: “It’s ominous, menacing.” He alludes to one of his other passions, aircraft, and notes that during both world wars, the Germans deliberately de-synchronised their aircraft engines as the resulting droning sound became a kind of psychological warfare against enemy populations.

Rachmaninoff’s First Symphony is a bit like that, he argues: “It gives the symphony its power.

Besides,” Chris says dryly, “you do need a depressing symphony sometimes in order to avoid a surfeit of joy.”

Asked whether he has any other particular favourites, he rifles through his impressive CD collection, pulling out a mass by Marc-Antoine

Charpentier (1643-1704), Requiem by contemporary Jean Gilles, and Heinrich Schutz’s “Seven Last Words of Christ”. Making the eclectic cut as well is an album by Gothic Voices entitled “A Feather on the Breath of God”, featuring the 12th

century plainchant of Hildegard of Bingen.

Surely, he is moved closer to the spirit listening to such divinely ethereal music?

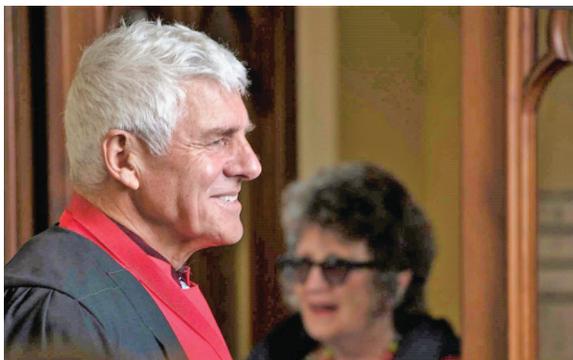
“No, I don’t ‘do’ spiritual. I’m a naïve realist when it comes to philosophy. I think the whole lot is sacred – I don’t make a distinction between sacred and profane.”

Which could go a long way to explaining why he also loves Abba...††

By Jill Rutherford



CHOIR NEWS



Welcome Graham Murray!

Graham has joined the swelling ranks of the bass section.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I was born here in the 1940s, but up until my return in September I've lived here only about six years. I grew up in Wellington, taught at high schools (Chem, Physics, Maths, Sci) and was office manager in architect offices run by Zolna, my wife.

You've just recently started coming along to Knox – did you used to attend, or your family?

I was in the Knox Choir in 1967, and rejoining on my return appealed. Was it in the genes? My parents married after meeting in Knox choir!

Can you tell us a bit about your musical experience/background?

I learnt piano way back, which made listening to music more interactive, but there's nothing like making music out loud outside - have made a trumpet ring out in places such as Fiordland! I sang "The Armed Man" while living in Dubai.

Favourite music or composer? Favourite hymn?

Beethoven and Chopin.

Charles Wesley's "And Can it Be, That I Should Gain?" must be one of the best.††

Tis the Season to ... Give! PSO Update

Foodbank

Many thanks to those who have donated clean empty jars for us to use in the foodbank, we now have more than enough and no longer require any further jars at this time. Wishlist for donated food items: rice, coffee, tea, children's lunch snacks i.e. muesli bars, packets of raisins, etc.

Pack it up, Pass it on

What you can donate: Clean, re-usable and unbroken: clothing, shoes, collectables, bric-a-brac, fabric, household items, jewellery, books, puzzles, or antiques.*At this stage we are unable to accept donations of household furniture, electrical goods and bedding (unless new) due to lack of storage - thank you for understanding.

Pack it up, then phone us on **477 7115** to order yellow donation bags for you, your friends or family and we'll deliver them to your letter box.

Pass it on, and drop your bags to:

Shop on Carroll or Shop on St Andrew: Monday to Friday 10-5pm, Saturday 10:30-3:30pm

Bulk donations

If you have bulk donation, large items or can't make it to one of our donation locations, please book a free collection by giving us a call to arrange a free pick up.

We can deliver lots of bags if you want to make this an event!

Get your church or workplace to take part and host a 'Pack it up, Pass it on' day?

What happens to your items?

100% of your donation goes to supporting families in need, or sold through one of our two Shop On charity op shops. All proceeds help support our welfare and social services in Otago

God bless, & Merry Christmas everyone! Carolyn Sims

Introducing Indie, Rishi and Judah



Indie Venkatraman is a wonderful mix of countries, cultures and creeds.

Born in Thailand, raised in Chennai, India, by a Hindu Brahmin father and a Methodist mother, educated at a Church of South India (CSI) school to better her English, converted to Christianity and university-educated in Dunedin, scholar, wife, mother, Tamilian. Oh, and husband Paul lives in Tasmania.

You may have noticed Indie sitting in the back of the church accompanied by her two children, daughter Rishi, 12, and son Judah, 10, who have joined the children's choir ("Sara Brown jumped on us as soon as we came to Knox – "Do your children sing?" she recalls with a smile).

They've been attending Knox since earlier this year when Indie, on a visa, could no longer stay in Australia with Paul; she decided to return with her children to Dunedin, a city she loves, while she sorts out her visa issues. It all sounds quite complicated and stressful, but Indie seems to be taking everything in her stride: the children are in local schools (Kavanagh College and Sacred Heart), and Indie is busy working as a summer scholar at the Centre for Sustainability. Usually she also works at the Otago School of Business in semester times. It quickly becomes clear what grounds her: her faith.

"I told Dad that I wanted to be a Christian when I was seven," she says. Indie (short for Indira

which she doesn't use anymore as in Sanskrit it can mean goddess) attributes her interest in Christianity in part to her mother, who was allowed by her husband to read Indie Bible stories, but primarily to her school's choir master. "He was an Anglo Indian. He would preach the Gospel between practice and it got to me."

But what about father? Of Brahmin descent who valued the sacred Sanskrit scriptures and teachings of his own faith? How did he react? "My Dad's culture accepts a well-reasoned argument," she explains, "so he accepted it after repeated arguing and presenting my case for Christianity. This is not true of every convert. I think my dad was lenient to me. But, this also meant growing up reading the Bible from not only a personal perspective, but a comparative and theological perspective."

Her father also valued education, and he agreed for his daughter to attend the CSI school "at the risk of my going to a different God." Hindus, she says, generally accept Jesus as a saviour quite easily as there are lots of gods within the Hindu pantheon with whom they have what she described as a "transactional" relationship.

"So, they can accept Jesus just fine. Just not the Lordship." It's the requirement that Christians put Jesus above all others that is generally not acceptable. Christianity, Indie explains, is also seen as a remnant of an oppressive colonial past.

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Indie, cont'd from page 13

In the end, her father let her continue at the CSI school and have access to a Bible, but not to attend Church or be baptised: "I asked twice. He said no twice. Dad's word was final." She later regretted her agreement not to go to Church as she missed the fellowship.

"I think Dad felt like he'd lost his daughter to a foreign deity. He'd get told by his own (Brahmin) family, 'Why can't she use that brain of hers to study our *own* scriptures?'"



So, Indie learned early to tread a fine line between her new faith and her ancient culture: "The Lord helps me discern what is cultural and what is religious."

Her wedding to Paul was a case in point. Held at St John's Roslyn and permitted by then-Bishop Kelvin Wright, it was what Indie calls a "cultural" wedding, incorporating elements of both traditions such as the exchanging of gifts and the groom "pretending" not to want to marry the bride and trying to walk out the door. "My father would then stop him from leaving, and persuade Paul that he really *would* want to marry me, that I would be a good helper to him. And that I was a scholar myself."

Her love for Paul is another act of faith. She met Paul when she first came to Otago from India to study. Originally from Sri Lanka and now a NZ

citizen, Paul was leading a student Christian group when Indie attended one night with a friend. They soon hit it off, discovering much in common, even research interests and "how we see the world".

Taking a break from her own research, Indie embraced motherhood. Her first child was aptly named Rishona, Hebrew for first born, followed by Judah, Hebrew for praise. Names matter, she says. "Tamils believe that what you are named resonates."

In 2011, the young family left for Australia – Paul to the University of Tasmania where he was offered a position, and Indie to study a masters at the same university. In 2017 Indie moved to the University of Melbourne's Faculty of Business and Economics and Melbourne School of Engineering. While there, the family attended Melbourne's Church of All Nations, of the Uniting Church in Australia. Paul followed and worked in industry for a while. Now he is the CEO of Tasmanian

charity, Show Hope; started during the lock down to improve the lives of international students, it is growing rapidly.

But with her visa running out earlier this year, Indie and the children returned to Dunedin; Knox will be their church home until the family can be reunited again.††



From the Archives by Lyndall Hancock

Been there, done that

Knox has seen it all before – in November 1918 with the ‘Spanish flu’ that didn’t cause lock down as we know it now, but which meant that our big Sunday School Halls in Great King Street hurriedly became the Knox Auxiliary Hospital. The Dunedin Industrial Chaplain, Canon Bryan King, organised 50 plus beds there, and 50 more beds for convalescents in the Hanover Street Baptist Hall.

My mother, with nursing training, was in one of the teams of people who went house to house throughout Dunedin, finding people in need. Her lasting memory was of the ‘genteel poverty’ of many homes where there was no spare food or changes of bedding, and of other homes where everyone was so ill that there was no-one to go for help.

A major result of all this was that a church member and nursing Sister, **Jessie Torrance**, was appointed as the Knox Church Nurse to be paid by Knox to serve *anyone* in North Dunedin who needed her. From 1919 to 1943, she worked quietly and efficiently. I consider Nurse Torrance to be the most outstanding Knox woman from 1860 onward – but she doesn’t figure greatly in our church records (written by the men!).

[Amen to that sister Lyndall!]



More on Jessie Torrance from Wikipedia:

Torrance was born in [Dunedin](#) in 1874, the second daughter of Scottish immigrants Eliza Wright and John Ainslie Torrance. Her upbringing was heavily influenced by religion - her father was the chaplain at Dunedin's hospital, jail and asylum, a lay preacher and elder in the Presbyterian Church.



Torrance trained as a nurse at [Dunedin Hospital](#), passing her state registration examinations at the end of 1908. On graduating, Torrance went into private nursing, and after the [Plunket Society](#) was established in 1907, she became one of the earliest Plunket nurses. She also worked for St John Ambulance for 13 years, including during World War I.

Shortly after the devastating 1918 influenza pandemic, Knox Church in Dunedin hired Torrance as a parish nurse; a bequest in 1915 by a local benefactor provided funds for such an appointment.

Torrance held a daily clinic in rooms at the Knox Sunday School in Great King Street, made visits to patients in their homes, dispensed medications and lent nursing equipment as needed. She saw anyone in need in the community, and provided social work services as well as nursing. In addition, she tutored students of the church's Missionary Training Unit and nurses who wanted to become deaconesses. In the 1920s, Torrance was made an honorary deaconess of Knox Church. She retired from nursing in 1943, having served Knox Church for 25 years. She died in Dunedin on 12 December 1949.††

Left: Torrance with the Very Rev DC Herron of Knox Church. **Photos:** Presbyterian Archives.

Knox People



Magnificent Obsession

Mike Houghe (above), a retired engineer and doting grandfather, creates some Christmas magic with a train display in the Knox chapel

I spent 30 years as an Engineer for 3M Company.

Most of the time I built and installed machines to manufacture computer tape, magnetic storage discs, floppy discs, and video tape.

I got involved in model trains about 25 years ago when my nephew wanted to visit a train show in St. Paul, Minnesota. After a few years he moved on to other interests, and I was stuck with some trains. So, I started to accumulate them.

In 2005, I set up a 2-by-3 metre Christmas display at Peg's parish in Beaverton, Oregon. Each year, the display slowly expanded until by 2017 it was 2 by 8 metres. To balance the secular and sacred

aspects of the exhibit, several churches and a synagogue were added to the display.

Last Christmas, my daughter's family were in Oregon and my grandchildren experienced snow instead of sunny summer weather for December 25. Grandson Mac got a chance to run the trains on my layout.

This year I wanted to create a more modest display for the grandkids. I wanted to set it up as a dream they might have, mixing Dunedin with Oregon memories.

Chris Bloore offered the use of his garage and extensive tool collection to accomplish this task. I'd say that Chris, with his talents, time and tools, was essential to the project.

(Asked how much time it took him to construct the display, Mike was coy: "When you have a hobby that mutates into an obsession, the time involved is not to be tallied!")



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