

Getting to know Knox Waitara

How did we at St John's come to know the people of Knox Presbyterian Church Waitara? Just where is Waitara, anyway...?

Located north-east of Mount Taranaki the town of Waitara faces considerable social and economic challenges. The schools are at decile 1 or 2 and the unemployment rate is twice that of the Taranaki region. The people of Knox Presbyterian have risen to the challenges and through their ministry and mission offer a wonderful witness of their faith in Jesus Christ. The expansion of their mission and growth in the local community has necessitated the redevelopment of their buildings and site. Talking to *Press Go* (the Presbyterian capital funding group which helps to facilitate significant growth initiatives) they were encouraged to pursue their dream of brand new facilities and raising the ambitions 2.4 million dollars needed. The congregation themselves raised a staggering one million dollars! On 1 June 2011 Knox Presbyterian and *Press Go* representatives made a presentation to the St John's Session asking for a \$300,000 contribution from St John's for their building project. Session unanimously supported their request and a congregational meeting was called for Sunday 24th July 2011. This congregational meeting also delivered a unanimous decision to gift this money to Knox Presbyterian.

Those responsible at St John's look after the resources with great care, and because of

their diligence we don't have money just sitting around – it is actively put to use for the various ministry and outreach initiatives we are committed to. And yet, the case for helping Knox Presbyterian is so compelling, and their example so inspiring, our response is to join with them in our ability to do so. Connected together as a family of churches in New Zealand we have a responsibility for the growth of God's mission, and therefore to each other. Together we at St John's have accurately discerned God's Spirit moving and advancing the work of the church.

We value our connection with Knox Presbyterian and I hope you will join with me as we continue to be mutually enriched by the friendship we have through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Yours in Christ,
Allister Lane

(Allister is one of the ministers at St John's since 2008. He is now also a father of three. His email is a.lane@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz)



Across the road from where I work is a church. One side of the church is bordered by a road that bristles with commuter traffic. The church was old and dilapidated with roof rusting, paint peeling and the odd window pane cracked. Some time ago the church was demolished. Within days the section had been cleared. After a while the cleared section became a bustling building site and a splendid new church building began to materialise. The completed church features floor to ceiling windows along the side of the church facing the road and a large cross dominates a feature wall. I am sure that many a passerby would have viewed the 'old' church as a metaphor for the state of the wider church. I hope that they have reviewed their impression and now see the building as a powerful witness to the vitality of the church in our city.

I have been 'thumbing through' copies of "OUR MAGAZINE" published by the Young Men's Bible Class. All the copies that I have read are from the 1890s. They are a fascinating window into the life of St John's over a century ago. An article on the '40 year

history of St John's' drew my attention. I was impressed by the vision of the congregation who decided to move from the Athenaeum and Mechanics Institute Building, near Plimmer Sreps where the services were first held and build a church on the corner of Willis and Dixon Streets that would accommodate more people. When the church was destroyed by a heart breaking fire in 1884 the congregation showed great fortitude and vision. Anticipating the growth of Wellington's population they decided to build a much larger church. The new church did not come cheap. The congregational financial commitments for this task were extensive. More so when you consider that in the 1880s New Zealand was in the vice like grip of economic recession. The church was built within a year. It was an impressive feat.

Over a recent weekend our two ministers and their families along with other members of the congregation were invited to Knox Church, Waitara for the dedication and associated celebrations for their recently built church. Waitara has had its share of economic woes over the years and Knox has been a community focussed church offering an array of programmes for the local people. The day after the visit I e-mailed Stuart Simpson to see how the visit had gone. In his reply, Stuart wrote, "The building was really impressive. However, the congregation even more so. They have worked so hard and should be very proud of themselves and yet they see this as only the beginning of how they are going to impact their community."

It's exciting to see the church in good heart in so many places.

Rob Anderson



Plaque marking the site of the first St John's service

Faith in Action *Knox Waitara Celebrates*

It was a huge privilege to travel with the Lane family, the Simpson family, Mary Gibb, Ted Cizadlo, Lesley Shaw and Margaret Galt to Knox Waitara's opening of the new Church building complex that we have supported. St John's was warmly acknowledged for our contribution of \$300,000 over 5 years by many people. But, while we appreciated that, it was the least important thing to come from the trip.

There was great joy in celebrating the opening of a large building that incorporates a large theatre style worship sanctuary, offices, gymnasium, kitchen, and flexible meeting rooms under one roof. But as speaker after speaker emphasised, it is not the building that counts – it is the love and outreach that it supports. Knox has large youth programmes, pre-school music, and a host of community facing activities that will benefit from the new facilities. Knox's Minister, Dennis Flett put it best: "Knox Church Community Centre is more than tri-board, concrete, paint and colour steel... This place was built as a conduit for people to find God."



Knox itself raised more than \$1 million for a building with more than 300,000 nails supported on more than 1100 tonnes of concrete out of the \$2.7m raised. The leadership of the Church poured itself into

the project and led the way. The wider community got in behind too – with civic bodies and other churches contributing. The local Baptist Church arranged the catering for the opening dinner. Enthusiastic supporters were there from many other churches including the local Brethren assembly, who cooperate in youth programmes. Knox also funds other programmes – in the morning service, an appeal board was passed round for people to write down their contributions to support the local high school "Impact" Christian group – which attracts 50 out of 350 pupils.

The Sunday morning Church service featured a 15 person band with predominantly high school and other students in a setting encouraging all to contribute. Projected words fore and aft made it easy for those on stage to look up as much in the congregation. A team of half a dozen managed the lighting and sound.

What makes all this work? We are told the Congregation some years ago made a commitment to three things when looking to the future – serious prayer commitments, building community and hospitality to those who come. They make a point of identifying people's gifts and drawing on them.

We came back inspired. St John's may have given to Knox Waitara, but they are giving back to us.

David Galt
Session Clerk

1895 'Our Magazine' Excerpt

The Following is taken from the May 1895 edition of 'Our Magazine'. This was the magazine of The Young Men's Bible Class.

'About forty years ago, some seventy residents of Wellington signed and sent home to the Free Church of Scotland a requisition that a qualified Minister be sent out to form them into a congregation and continue to act as their pastor. In consequence of this the Rev. J. Moir came out with his family in 1853 and conducted Presbyterian services at the Antheneum.

A church capable of seating about one hundred and fifty was afterwards built near the site of the present church, and in this building services were held until 1869 when Mr Moir resigned his charge.

The Church of Scotland was again approached and asked to select a minister to fill the vacancy. The choice fell upon our present Pastor, who came out in 1868 and under whose charge the church has grown to its present dimensions. Shortly after the commencement of his ministry in Wellington, the building was enlarged to give seating accommodation for 250. As this proved inadequate the building



was removed and a handsome new building capable of seating 600 erected. The building with the attached schoolroom was destroyed by a fire on May the 9th 1884, the origin of which has never been discovered to this day. The congregation set so zealously to work that in a very short time the sum of 3140 pounds was collected and arrangements for rebuilding entered into.

The designs for the church and schoolroom were entrusted to Mr Turnbull, and the building contract to the late Mr Jas. Wilson. That both of them did their work well we have ample evidence in our church, which is without doubt, one of the best designed and most comfortable in New Zealand. Since Mr Paterson took over the Pastorate of

St. John's the population of the city has increased from 7000 to 35,000 inhabitants while the church membership has increased from 150 to 450 and the annual income from 800 pounds to 1800 pounds. The children attending the Sunday School now number 850.



The Difference

I got up early one morning
and rushed right into the day;
I had so much to accomplish
that I didn't have time to pray,
Problems just tumbled about me,
and heavier came each task,
"Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered
He answered, "you don't ask."
I wanted to see joy and beauty,
But the day toiled on, grey and bleak,
I wondered why God didn't show me.
He said, "You didn't seek."
I tried to come into God's presence;
I used my keys at the lock.
God gently and lovingly chided.
"My child, you didn't knock."
I woke up early this morning,
and paused before entering the day,
I had so much to accomplish
That I had to take time to pray.

Author unknown

Congratulations

Blessing of Glenn Westermeyer, son of Paul and Grandson of Jeanette and George. It's always good to see Paul and Glenn at St John's during one of their visits from Zurich.

Betty Littler and Anwyl Fowler who were made life members of The Women's Association.

Alice Potts and Matt on the birth of Levi Alexander on 7 January. Congratulations too, to grandmother Linda Shaw.

Matthew Potts who starts post graduate studies in Sydney.

All those who started at a new school or at University.



Parachute Trip

The invite form said 7:30am sharp, so naturally, being Thrive, we set off at 8:30. Everyone crammed like sardines into 4 vans, settling down, mentally preparing ourselves for the long ride ahead and figuring out how to work certain seatbelts...

After many hours of driving, a stop over at Scots Presbyterian Church, and, for some of us, lots of nice food (thanks Sam!), we finally arrived at our destination; Parachute 2013!

We put up the tents and then we were all ready for 3 non-stop days of worship, moshing, eating, laughing and strictly NO purpling! The highlights of the weekend included the phenomenal main meetings, listening to Switchfoot on the Saturday night at Main Stage, hearing Andrew Chesney's band, Until Autumn, raise the roof, Sunday night craziness in The Village ("It's the Circle of Life!!"), and, of course, the food. Enough said.

Throughout the weekend we all became closer and definitely have some memories



The village



The Mainstage

from that weekend that we probably won't forget anytime soon (yes, Sewage Collection truck, I'm talking to you). Despite events such as Thomas accidentally dropping a pot of boiling water on his foot (ouch!), we all managed to keep our spirits up and thoroughly enjoy the whole weekend. I know that even though a few of us are leaving to begin different paths this year, we'll always remember what great times we had at Parachute 2013 and the awesome God that none of it could have happened without!!

And you know what? *I kinda liked it.*

By **Madi Ojala**



Switchfoot

Why Knox Waitara?

As many of you know I visited Myanmar in November 2012 and spent some time talking with Church leaders from the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar. Recently a number of us from St John's visited the Knox Presbyterian Church in Waitara. As I have reflected on these two visits I have realised how in many ways these visits were similar. Often, when we hear the word 'mission' we think it only refers to overseas mission or possibly local, nearby mission possibilities however 'Mission' or let me say God's mission encompasses the entire creation. It is taking place in Myanmar, Te Aro and Waitara and we are in one way or another called to participate in this mission.

Some people have asked why St John's should send people to Myanmar and the response has come from the PCM itself, 'because we need to know we are not alone as we seek to be obedient to God'. In going I believe St John's has learnt much more about faith as well as shown friendship. What about this new relationship between Knox Waitara and St John's? What can we offer Knox Waitara and what is it that they can possibly teach us? First I think we need to embrace the idea that St John's and Knox do not live in a vacuum of faithfulness but rather we are all part of the same body, the body of Christ, therefore we need each other. Second, as two different communities of faith, God has given us different gifts and resources, which if we listen to each other faithfully, can and will be used to support, encourage and challenge each other as we seek to be faithful to God's calling to be involved in His mission.

While in Waitara, we heard from many people of how blessed they felt as a congregation and community that St John's had supported them so generously. It would have been quite easy to go with the knowledge that, yes, we St John's had given so much, and because of that, Knox had finished their building. However, although I felt very proud of St John's response to Knox request for support, I was humbled at how faithful and committed Knox were and continue to be. I am so pleased that we decided to support Knox with what God has given us so generously. Moreover, I am pleased we are open to learn and receive from Knox as we also seek to be faithful in our own community.

May God continue to bless the Faith Community in New Zealand and around the world and may we continue to listen, support, encourage each other as we seek to do what God has called us to do and be. If you do want to know more about the time at Knox Waitara don't hesitate to talk with Allister or myself.

Yours in Christ,

Stuart

(Stuart is one of the ministers at St John's since 2009.

His email is s.simpson@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz)

What's happening at St. John's

Mid March

10	Quarterly Communion
11	Quarterly Communion
13	Finance Committee Meeting
	Communication Committee Meeting
	Property Committee Meeting
14	ESL Study Group
17	Picnic Church
18	St John's Craft Group
20	Council Meeting
21	Men's Prayer Breakfast
24	Palm Sunday
26	Women's Association Easter Service
27	Scots College Easter Service
28	Outreach Committee Meeting
	Maundy Thursday Service
	ESL Study Group
29	Good Friday
31	Easter Sunday

April

3	Session Meeting
4	Men's Prayer Breakfast
5	Wine and Theology
8	St John's Craft Group
10	Finance Committee Meeting
	Property Committee Meeting
	Communications Committee Meeting
11	ESL Study Group

April continued

17	Council Meeting
18	Men's Prayer Breakfast
22	St John's Craft Group
23	Women's Association
24	Session Executive Meeting
25	Outreach Committee Meeting
	ESL Study Group

May

1	Session Meeting
2	Men's Prayer Breakfast
3	Wine and Theology
6	St John's Craft Group
8	Finance Committee Meeting
	Property Committee Meeting
	Communications Committee
9	ESL Study Group
12	Communion
13	Marriage Course begins
15	Council Meeting
16	Men's Prayer Breakfast
20	St John's Craft Group
	Marriage Course
23	Outreach Committee Meeting
	ESL Study Group
27	Marriage Course
28	Women's Association Meeting
29	Session Executive Meeting
30	Men's Prayer Breakfast