



KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

Sixth Sunday of Easter

10am – Sunday 17 May 2020

This service can be accessed from the Knox Church YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYksSjG0If00NeogNIGs7A>

or, after the live service concludes, from the Knox Church website <https://knoxchurch.net/>

Pre service music from around 9.45 am

Welcome and call to worship

Hymn

(tune Hyfrydol) from Church Hymnary - Charles Wesley

1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

3 Finish then thy new creation:
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee,
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

2 Come, almighty to deliver;
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Opening prayer, assurance of forgiveness and the announcement of peace

Children – Jordan Redding

Halle, halle, halle - Knox Junior Choristers

Readings – read by Hamish Spencer of Opoho Presbyterian Church

Acts 17:22-31

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and

earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him--though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.' Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

John 14:15-21

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

"I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

Anthem

Reflection “The Spirit of truth”

When we make a significant life-choice that people close to us might not understand, how do we explain it to them? Most of us wrestle with this challenge at some stage in our life. I did in my first year at University in Auckland. I was in a University hostel and for the first time living close to Christians. As I got to know them, I realised that I wanted what they had. So one night I knelt beside my bed and prayed – God I don't know what they have, but I want it. And my life changed, dramatically. I found a local Presbyterian Church and the people there helped me begin to learn the Christian faith. They gave me a simple Bible I avidly read. The minister visited me in my hostel. I became part of the young adult group with lectures about the faith and a study group and outreach and social events and more.

This was a big transition for me, because I didn't come from a Christian background, although I had been to Sunday School. After a while, the possibility of baptism was raised. I talked it through with others and spoke with my minister. I participated in classes to learn about baptism and about being Christian. A date was set for the celebration. Then I wrestled with whether to tell my family. I sensed a big gulf between what I was doing and what I had heard them say about religion. In our town, it felt as if religion was strange and religious people were strange. And as I was new to the Christian faith, I wasn't confident that I could explain what I was doing and why, in ways that would make sense to them. At that time, the gulf felt so big I could not find a way of bridging it. So I didn't tell them until much later. When I eventually did tell them, naturally, they were disappointed I had not told them earlier. Then something began to happen in our family. A little later, my older sister was baptised in the local church, and then a little later my mother decided to become part of that congregation. And my father shifted in his views as well. I learned that God was at work even if I didn't have everything worked out with the right words.

Over the last few weeks, people have been sharing in online worship who are wondering about faith and perhaps you feel that you need better words to make sense of it, for yourself and for those around you. Studies have shown that many younger people especially are curious about religion and go looking online. I think every Christian wrestles with how to explain their experience of Jesus, including to people who do not share their faith. It is also a challenge in New Zealand where many people do not know a Christian. As

Jesus prepared his followers for his death, he wanted them to see how they were part of an ongoing movement of the Spirit of God. They were not alone, not orphaned as he put it. They were going to be put on the spot but they needn't be anxious about their vulnerability.

The gospel of John has a unique view of the Holy Spirit. I will give you another Advocate, Jesus said, the Spirit of truth. The word is paracletos, one who accompanies and speaks for the other, a friend of the court, a representative, a communicator of what is true. Jesus speaks of himself as a paracletos and he says that when he departs, he will leave a replacement paracletos, the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit. Jesus emphasises how much he is in the life of his followers with startling words - "... you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me and I in you." God the loving parent in each of us, our life as part of the life of Jesus, and the life of Jesus in us.

If only I had realised that when I was 18 years old, I would not have been so anxious about how to bridge the gulf between my family and me. God would do it, and I could relax a little in not carrying the responsibility of it all, although I could share curiosity, and raise questions, and chip in thoughts when the opportunity arose – as it often did. I didn't need to be quiet because I hadn't worked things out or because my life was not perfect. Nor did I have to fit my faith into the frame others used. When Paul speaks of faith to Stoics in Athens, he quotes two Stoic poets. Poets. People who convey truth sideways, a phrase, an image, a fragment, a hint, an invitation. The Spirit of truth is at work in your life now, at this moment, and among those close to you, whether they know it or not, but when they do, well ... life changes. Let's affirm the Spirit's life. Let's celebrate it and be part of what she is doing around us. Thanks be to God.

Prayer for others and the Lord's Prayer – led by Janet Sim Elder

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Hymn

(tune Christ be our Light) from Church Hymnary - Bernadette Farrell

1 Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

*Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your Church gathered today.*

2 Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.
[Refrain]

3 Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.
[Refrain]

Blessing

We continue to appreciate all tithes, gifts and offerings. Our bank account number is 03 0903 0016425 00 and our charity number for tax rebate purposes is #CC52318.

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