



KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

10am – Sunday 28 June 2020

Music to prepare us for worship *"Adagio"* from Organ Symphony, Saint Saens
"Leibster Jesu- Jesus we are here", J S Bach (1685-1750)

The bell sounds, then quietness

Welcome – (Matthew 10:40)

Music of approach *"Let it be"* music by John Lennon

Carolyn Schmid/organ, Sara Brown/piano

Call to worship

(adapted from Ps 13)

Kia noho a Ihowa ki a koutou. May God be with you.

Ma Ihowa koe e manaaki. May God bless you.

I trust in your unfailing love;

My heart is joyful because of your saving help.

I will sing to you O God;

You have dealt with me lovingly.

Hymn

(tune Two Oaks) CH4 198 - Marty Haugen

1 Let us build a house where love
can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children
tell
how hearts learn to forgive;
built of hopes and dreams and
visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end
divisions:

*All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

2 Let us build a house where
prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to
seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of
Jesus:

*All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

3 Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.

Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:

All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Prayer, assurance of forgiveness - Extracts from Romans 6:15-23

E te whanau, in Christ we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God.**

Kia tau te rangimarie o te Karaiti ki runga i a koutou. May the peace of Christ be
with you always. **And also with you.**

Art and music –

Jesus Welcomes All, early 21st century, mural; *Jesus welcomes the children*,
1973, Jesus Mafa; *Jesus Welcomes All*, early 21st century, mural;

"Love Divine all loves excelling", Howard Goodall. Knox Church choirs

Children – A cup of cold water

Prayer for Illumination

Readings – Listen for God's Word to us ...

Romans 6:15-23

So, since we're out from under the old tyranny, does that mean we can live any old way we want? Since we're free in the freedom of God, can we do anything that comes to mind? Hardly. You know well enough from your own experience that there are some acts of so-called freedom that destroy freedom. Offer yourselves to sin, for instance, and it's your last free act. But offer yourselves to the ways of God and the freedom never quits. All your lives you've let sin tell you what to do. But thank God you've started listening to a new master, one whose commands set you free to live openly in his freedom! I'm using this freedom language because it's easy to picture. You can readily recall, can't you, how at one time the more you did just what you felt like doing—not caring about others, not caring about God—the worse your life became and the less freedom you had? And how much different is it now as you live in God's freedom, your lives healed and expansive in holiness? As long as you did what you felt like doing, ignoring God, you didn't have to bother with right thinking or right living, or right anything for that matter. But do you call that a free life? What did you get out of it? Nothing you're proud of now. Where did it get you? A dead end. But now

that you've found you don't have to listen to sin tell you what to do, and have discovered the delight of listening to God telling you, what a surprise! A whole, healed, put-together life right now, with more and more of life on the way! Work hard for sin your whole life and your pension is death. But God's gift is real life, eternal life, delivered by Jesus, our Master.

*Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church **Thanks be to God***

Matthew 10:40-42

"Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple -- truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."

*This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ **Praise to Christ the Word***

Reflection "Divine encounters"

Jesus said to his followers - "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." May these words sink into our souls. They name how everyday human interaction can give life, how something as ordinary as a welcome can be a divine encounter. These verses are often spoken of as a call to welcome people. But they're not really a call. They are more naming a promise, a promise that emphasises the value of personal encounter and smallest act of care, the offering of a cup of cold water. Let me describe the setting. Jesus and his followers relied on people welcoming them. As someone recently described it to me, they were couch-surfers. Sojourners, travellers, people who walked the way. Without healthy hostels, they needed people to offer hospitality. The earlier part of this chapter sets out what they were to do. As you travel, Jesus said, proclaim the good news. "Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons." But when they travelled, they couldn't anticipate how they would be received. The movement wasn't widely accepted or known or understood or appreciated. Indeed Jesus said - "I send you as sheep among wolves so be as wise as serpents and innocent as doves."

So they needed certain qualities. Courage to leave the safety of being with like-minded people, to risk speaking with people who had very different views. Sensitivity to read the moment, to discern what to say and how and when. How to negotiate their way with people who opposed what they stood for, and who did not like their opposition to the Roman Empire. Most of all, they needed to know that with all the disappointments and difficulties they were facing, going out to encounter people was worth-while.

So Jesus says "This is worth it, because when you are welcomed, the person who welcomes you welcomes me, and the God who sent me." Putting it differently - "Carry God's image out into the world, and do so with reverence, gentleness, humility, truthfulness, and love." Yes, there is great risk involved. Of course there is. But there is also reward. What would happen if we believed that we bear the presence of Christ to every person we encounter, in every home, workplace, or neighbourhood we enter, on email or twitter or facebook or Instagram or ? I am not speaking about an arrogant, presumptuous, self-righteous, serious

religious demeanour. I am speaking about having a humble sense of who we are in Christ when we interact with people.

What would happen if we saw every conversation as an opportunity to speak words of grace, every interaction as an opportunity to embody Christ's love for the neighbour? The disciples were saved from arrogance because there they were the least - fisherfolk, tax collectors, zealots, poor, with grating accents and coming from the wrong part of the country. Their only qualification was this – they sought to follow the man from Galilee. And yet they learned, as we do, that deeper personal encounters can reshape our thinking and influence the rest of our lives.

In 1983, I was in a group of students in the United States welcomed for afternoon tea into the home of John J Lewis of Atlanta. Lewis was a leader in the civil rights movement, at the time an Atlanta city councillor and who has been a congressman since 1987. We were from many different parts of the world and there was nothing remarkable about us. Yet he welcomed us into his home, and offered marvellous hospitality, answered our questions, shared his experience, spoke of his faith, and the deep struggle for civil rights. It was a divine encounter that affected us. We talked about the impact of that visit and how it shifted our thinking. What have been those encounters for you?

One of Eugene Peterson's books is entitled – Christ plays in ten thousand places. He quotes a Gerard Manly Hopkins sonnet – "I say more: the just man justices; keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces; Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is – Christ. For Christ plays in ten thousand places, lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his To the Father through the features of men's faces."

Acts in God's eye what in God's eye we are – Christ. All of this has implications for the church. For what is at the heart of the Church is not an institution or a theory or a set of moral principles. What is at our heart is an encounter, a personal encounter that always involves human with human in some way. And so the question to be asked in the church is this - where have we encountered Christ this week, this day, in this situation.

The singularity of that focus relates to Paul's theme of freedom. When we focus on the encounter with Christ, and on who people are in Christ, we put in their proper place what can divide and discriminate – education, age, ethnicity, politics, preferences. When we see the other, we are invited to see what in God's eye we are – Christ.

That means that churches and congregations like ours will be, will aspire to be, will want to, will pray to be, as diverse in our preferences as any human community can be. We would want the only thing we have in common is that we have sensed Christ in one of a ten thousand places. Whether we are a prophet who speaks inconvenient truths, a person trying to do what is right, a little one, poorly thought of, the least of all, or whether we are a person returning from overseas, when we are welcomed, Christ is welcomed. Jesus said to his followers - "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me."

Song - *meditatively*

E te Atua aroha mai, (3x)

Ake, ake, tonu e, (2x)

E te Atua manaaki mai, (3x)

Ake, ake, tonu e, (2x)

E te Atua awhina mai, (3x)

Ake, ake, tonu e, (2x)

We are sent

Prayer for others and the Lord's Prayer

Anglican prayer book

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.

E tō mātou Matua i te rangi
Kia tapu tōu Ingoa.
Kia tae mai tōu rangatiratanga.
Kia meatia tāu e pai ai
ki runga ki te whenua,
kia rite anō ki tō te rangi.
Hōmai ki a mātou āiane
he taro mā mātou mō tēnei rā.
Murua ō mātou hara,
Me mātou hoki e muru nei
i ō te hunga e hara ana ki a mātou.
Āua hoki mātou e kawea kia whakawaia;
Engari whakaorangia mātou i te kino:
Nōu hoki te rangatiratanga, te kaha,
me te korōria, Āke āke āke. Āmine.

An aspect of mission

Hymn

(tune Wetherby) CH4 694 - Richard Gillard

1 Brother, sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

3 I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

2 We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

4 I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
till we've seen this journey through.

Dedication of offering – *Please place your offerings in the offering bags held out for you at the door as you leave.*

Blessing

Music for our leaving - "*Jesu Joy*" Fantasia BWV 572, J S Bach (1685-1750)

Notices have been emailed to people for whom we have email addresses. They are also shown on the screens at the conclusion of the service. For those who have not received the emailed notices, printed copies can be uplifted from the table at the rear of the church.

In relation to your monetary offering, you may:

- *Make regular automatic payments (which are tax deductible) – contact Helen Thew at plannedgiving@knoxchurch.net*
- *Give online to the Church's bank account at 03 0903 0016425 00 - our charity number for tax rebate purposes is #CC52318.*
- *Give at the conclusion of the service.*

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