



KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

10am – Sunday 2 August 2020

Music to prepare us for worship *"The snow of yesterday"* Karl Jenkins (b. 1944), *"Adagio"* (O lamb of God, Grant us peace) Samuel Barber (1910-81), *"Herzlich thut mich verlangen"* (O Sacred head sore wounded) J S Bach (1685-1750), *"Entree Solonelle"* Leon Boellmann (1862-97)

The bell sounds, then quietness

Welcome

Music of approach *"God that made earth and heaven"* music by Charles L Naylor

Jesse Hanan/tenor soloist

Call to worship

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

Ma Ihowa koe e manaaki. May God bless you.

With those who live in dry and weary lands,

who know what it is to hunger and to thirst,

that we may learn what it is to hunger for God,

to thirst for justice, so all may have daily bread,

we gather to worship.

Hymn

CH4 348 - Rusty Edwards

1 Praise the One who breaks the darkness

with a liberating light.

Praise the One who frees the prisoners turning blindness into sight.

Praise the One who preached the Gospel,

curing every dread disease,

calming storms, and feeding thousands with the very bread of peace.

2 Praise the One who blessed the children

with a strong yet gentle word.

Praise the One who drove out demons with a piercing, two-edged sword.

Praise the One who brings cool water to the desert's burning sand;

from this well comes living water, quenching thirst in every land.

3 Praise the one true love incarnate,
Christ, who suffered in our place.
Jesus died and rose for many
that we may know God by grace.
Let us sing for joy and gladness,
seeing what our God has done.
Praise the one redeeming glory.
Praise the One who makes us one.

Prayer, assurance of forgiveness –

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.**

Music and art *“Prayer of the Children”* words and music by Kurt Bestor (1996)

Loaves and Fish, Helen Moloney; *Words Can't Feed the Hungry*, Michal Pawlicki;
Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes, Patricia Reid

Children

Hymn

(tune St Columba, CH4 598) CH4 659 - Fred Kaan

1 Put peace into each other's hands
and like a treasure hold it;
protect it like a candle flame,
with tenderness enfold it.

2 Put peace into each other's hands
with loving expectation;
be gentle in your words and ways,
in touch with God's creation.

3 Put Christ into each other's hands,
he is love's deepest measure;
in love make peace, give peace a
chance
and share it like a treasure.

Prayer for Illumination

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

Romans 9:1-5

I am speaking the truth in Christ--I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit – I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

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

Matthew 14:13-21

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

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

Reflection "God's Politics"

Every week in gathered worship, we act out one of the greatest failings in our nation. Every week, we put food in the blue boxes at the back of the Church for the Presbyterian Support Food Bank. It is important we do so, yet ritual is a weekly judgement on our economy, a weekly call to the followers of Jesus to do something about how people are meant to share the fruit of the land. In that acted out indictment, we put that food alongside a table that proclaims a contrasting vision - an inclusive, just, equitable world in which there is enough food and drink for everyone.

The gospel today also presents a striking contrast. Our reading began "Now when Jesus heard this ... ". The "this" in the reading was the beheading of John the Baptist. Jesus had been a follower of John. John had baptised Jesus. They were cousins. John was a prophet and the ruler Herod did not like him because of his criticism of Herod's relationship with his brother's wife. Matthew takes us to Herod's birthday party. At the party, in return for his brother's wife's daughter's dancing, Herod promised her whatever she wanted. Prompted by her mother who did not like John's criticism of the relationship, she said "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." And so it was. This great prophet of God, a person of faith and heritage and influence was tragically beheaded. Matthew gives us a picture of a terribly unjust and inhuman and cruel gathering of people to eat and drink.

So what a contrast the next verses represent. Women and children and 5000 men sit down on a grass hillside and every one of them receives food. But watch the progression here. The disciples were free-marketeers it seemed - so they said to Jesus " ... send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Let each person fend for themselves. Every person has the capacity to find their own food. And we know what happens to the children and women, the most vulnerable - they can try the food bank. But what does Jesus say in the face of such a philosophy? "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." And then the disciples offer the ideology of scarcity - "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." "See how little. We cannot share. There isn't enough to go around so we need to keep this bread and fish for ourselves."

"Bring them here to me", Jesus says. Perhaps the most significant line in the passage. Bring your ideologies here. Bring your political inclinations here. My mother once said to my father, good-humouredly, that even if a dog stood for the particular party for which he always voted, he would vote for it. That's not good enough for followers of Jesus. Our voting is always subject to the gospel. Jesus held the loaves before God, blessed them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples and they gave them to the crowds. That is a guide to our political decision-making about the economy, that there is enough for everyone and everyone should have enough. We are not to keep too much for ourselves.

Two starkly different pictures. An ostentatious indulgent self-centred birthday party at the centre of which stands the murder of a prophet. And children women and men on a grassy hillside with enough food for every one of them.

On the noticeboard outside the Knox Park is a quote from the General Secretary of the United Nations. This is what he said recently – “The pandemic “operates like an X-ray, revealing the fractures of the fragile skeleton of the societies we have built. It highlights misconceptions and lies everywhere: the lie that the free market can provide medical care to everyone, the fiction that unpaid personal care work is not work, the illusion that we live in a post-racist world, the myth that we are all in the same boat. We all float in the same sea, but some are on super yachts, while others are clinging to floating debris,”. He was recalling that 26 of the wealthiest people on the planet have as much wealth as half the world’s population. “We are at a turning point”

Indeed we are, as we were when the head of John the Baptist was served on a platter, as we were when that crowd sat on a grassy hillside.

Church bodies world-wide are working together with economists to develop a new global economic architecture. And there are some shifts here in New Zealand. There has been a dramatic increase in ethical investing. We have been made aware of the working conditions of those who manufacture our clothes. Many people are asking for higher taxation to enable greater equity. Many Christians believe there has to be some kind of wealth tax to enable a greater equity between generations. The pandemic has highlighted inequalities we must address. New Zealand has an ethnic wealth gap. In 2015, Stats NZ found that the median Pākehā had \$114,000 in wealth – compared to \$12,000 for the median Pasifika, \$23,000 for the median Māori and \$32,000 for the median Asian. The wealth gap between the median Pākehā and Māori is \$91,000 and it is getting worse.

Of course economic wealth is not everything, and yet here is Max Rashbrooke whose work is in this area - “It’s very difficult to maintain all the other things you want to do and draw on the other sources of wealth if you don’t have economic wealth.” “Income is the present, and wealth is the future. You use income to pay your daily bills and get through the week. Wealth gives you security for planning for the future.” Important in an increasingly unpredictable world.

As we come to the election this year, we know New Zealand’s economic system needs turning towards equity. Herod’s birthday party with the head of John the Baptist on a platter or Jesus feeding thousands on a grassy hillside?

Hymn

AA 85 - Colin Gibson

*Let justice roll down like a river,
let justice roll down like a sea,
let justice roll down like a river,
let justice begin through me.*

1 Justice for all who go hungry,
crying to God to be fed,
left in a world of abundance
to beg for a morsel of bread. [*Refrain*]

2 Justice for all who are powerless,
yearning for freedom in vain,
plundered, and robbed of their
birthright
silently bearing their pain. [*Refrain*]

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.

Music "My peace I leave you" music from Taize

An aspect of mission

The Reverend Peg Pfab, from the United States, who with her husband Mike is visiting from Portland, Oregon.

A blessing of the Knox Apartment, that it may be a blessing to those who will live there.

Hymn

CH4 543 - 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 food, many are hungry;
longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for
others;
shared until all are fed. [*Refrain*]

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

Blessing

Music for our leaving “*Fantasia in C minor*” J S Bach (1685-1750)

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.*

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