



KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

10am – Sunday 23 August 2020

Music to prepare us for worship

"The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba", from 'Solomon' Act 3. G F Handel (1685-1759)

"Air form a concerto" G F Handel (1685-1759)

played by Karen Knudson

The bell sounds, quietness, welcome

Music of approach *"L'abbandono"* Vincenzo Bellini (1801-35) Sarah Hubbard/ soprano soloist

text: *If you find him where he is, tell him to come back to the one who adores him*

Call to worship (inspired by Psalm 138)

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

Ma Ihowa koe e manaaki. May God bless you.

We gather to give thanks to You, O God, with all our heart.

We will sing Your praises before all creation, and rejoice in Your steadfast love!

You have created us O Lord, and made us for Yourself.

You will not leave unfinished the work of your hands.

Hymn

(tune Down Ampney) FFS 47 - Marnie Barrell

1 Maker of mystery,
dreamer of what will be,
well-spring and fertile ground of all our
growing:
tending the buried seed,
foreseeing every need,
you draw us into life beyond our
knowing.

2 Christ, strong and living vine,
spreading through space and time,
deep rooted in the love of God our
mother:
dying, you live and share
your strength with us, to bear
ripe fruit in season for the life of others.

3 Wild Spirit, springing green,
coiled in the depths unseen,
promise of fruit within the seed
maturing;
new life, you grow and swell,
burst from the outgrown shell,
hundredfold yield in every age ensuring.

4 Living and loving God,
sing in the pulse of our blood;
help us to know you in your own
creation,
love you, the life of all,
serve you and hear your call
from our first forming to our full
salvation.

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 *“Stay Thy Hand”* from *Solomon* G F Handel (1685-1759), text Moses Mendes (d.1758) *Prayer for protection of loved ones/ asking those in power not to resort to violence* Sarah Hubbard/ soprano soloist

Children

Hymn - Psalm 138

CH4 95 - Psalm 138, John L Bell

1 I shall praise you, O God, from my soul,
I shall praise you, O God, from my soul;
though my song be at odds
with the will of earthly gods,
I shall praise you, O God, from my soul.

2 I shall bow down before heaven’s throne,
I shall bow down before heaven’s throne;
and with joy I’ll confess
your great love and faithfulness.
I shall bow down before heaven’s throne.

3 Lord, your promise is raised above heaven,
Lord, your promise is raised above heaven;
you replied to my plea,
giving hope and strength to me.
Lord, your promise is raised above heaven.

4 Let the monarchs of earth know your name,
let the monarchs of earth know your name;
let them learn of you ways
and respond in fear and praise.
Let the monarchs of earth know your name.

5 Though exalted, God cares for the poor,
though exalted, God cares for the poor;
and he notes if the proud
walk the paths he disallowed.
Though exalted, God cares for the poor.

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

Romans 12:1-8

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God--what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of

yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

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

Matthew 16:13-20

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

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

Reflection "Who do you say?"

Jesus asks - who do you say that I am? That is a central ongoing question for followers of Jesus. It is a question that even when we answer it once, never goes away. It is not as if when we turn to Christ, we find an answer that will do for the rest of our lives. It is not as if we will ever come up with a water-tight, complete, detailed formula with an exclamation mark at the end. Nor is it enough to simply restate the Apostles' Creed, as good as that is. As circumstances change, the question gets asked again. So in coming to faith, we answer. In taking up a job, we answer. In entering into a relationship, we answer. As we face death, we answer. Our answers evolve as we age. And it is not just a personal question. It is for every congregation through all its experiences. A crucial, central, pivotal question - Who do we say Jesus is.

I want today to take a tangent with this question. It is a lively topic at present because of the Black Lives Matter movement. People are looking at statues and institutions and who they point to and how they continue to influence us. One strand has been exploring the concept of a white Jesus. The topic is broad, so I take a small sliver, some artistic representations.

I have visited hundreds of churches and church halls in New Zealand and Australia. There is one depiction of Jesus more common than any other. This one ... blue eyes, light hair, light skin. Painted by Warner Sallman in 1940. Sallman created art for advertising campaigns and successfully marketed this picture worldwide by partnering two publishing companies, one Protestant, one Catholic. It is called the head of Christ and it came to be included on everything from prayer cards to stained glass windows, from calendars to hymnals. Sallman's painting continues a long tradition of white Europeans creating and disseminating pictures of Christ made in their own image.

A Melbourne theologian Robyn Whitaker has written about the significance of how we portray Jesus. She points out the problem of Sallman's painting - Jesus was not white. While there is no physical description of Jesus in the Bible, there is also no doubt that the historical Jesus, the man who was executed by the Roman State in the first century CE, was a brown-skinned, Middle Eastern Jew. Now to be sure, he could be olive skinned but it is extremely unlikely he looked anything like Sallman's portrayal. Now Jesus may not have looked anything like this, but this is likely to be more realistic.

Does this matter? It matters when we marry the art to racism. It seems that over time and in various ways, the representing of Jesus as a white European has influenced how people have treated other people who are not white. Some commentators have shown the correlation between such portrayals and white

supremacy movements. And not just racism - antisemitism. Some artists sought to distance Jesus and his parents from their Jewishness. Even small details such as having no pierced ears because earrings were associated with Jewish women. The Archbishop of Canterbury recently called for people to reflect on how the images of Jesus have influenced our faith.

As a society, we have become aware of the power of representation and the importance of diverse role models. Whitaker gives an example. Kenyan actress Lupita Nyong'o won an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for her role in *12 Years a Slave*. In interviews since then, Nyong'o has repeatedly talked about her feelings of inferiority as a young woman because all the images of beauty she saw around her were of lighter-skinned women. It was only when she saw the fashion world embracing Sudanese model Alek Wek that she realised black could be beautiful too.

If we can recognise the importance of ethnically and physically diverse role models in our media, can we do the same for faith? Can we be thoughtful about what happens when images of a whitened Jesus dominate? Many churches and cultures do depict Jesus as a brown or black man. Orthodox Christians usually have a very different iconography to that of European art – if you enter a church in Africa, you'll likely see an African Jesus on display. But when we see a limited range of images of Jesus, says Whitaker, we allow the mainstream Christian community to separate their devotion to Jesus from compassionate regard for those who look different. Indeed, she suggests, it creates a cognitive disconnect, where we can feel deep affection for Jesus but little empathy for a Middle Eastern person. It likewise has implications for the theological claim that humans are made in God's image. If God is always imaged as white, then the default human becomes white. Such thinking undergirds racism.

What difference would it make if we just remembered that Jesus was brown? If we were confronted with the reality that the body hung on the cross was a brown body: one broken, tortured, and publicly executed by an oppressive regime. How might it change our attitudes if we could see that the unjust imprisonment, abuse, and execution of the historical Jesus has more in common with the experience of indigenous peoples or asylum seekers than it does with those who hold power in the church and usually represent Christ? Perhaps most radical of all, says Whitaker, what might change if we were more mindful that the person Christians celebrate as God in the flesh and saviour of the entire world was not a white man, but a Middle Eastern Jew.

In New Zealand there has been a strand of art that portrays Jesus as Maori. There is the James K Baxter poem, the Maori Jesus. "I saw the Maori Jesus Walking on Wellington Harbour. He wore blue dungarees, His beard and hair were long. His breath smelled of mussels and paraoa. When he smiled it looked like the dawn. When he broke wind the little fishes trembled. When he frowned the ground shook. When he laughed everybody got drunk. The Maori Jesus came on shore And picked out his twelve disciples. One cleaned toilets in the railway station ..." And so the poem continues ...

Anglican and Catholic churches especially have represented Jesus as Maori - St Faith's Ohinemutu Rotorua; The Catholic church at Hiruharama on the Whanganui River; And then of course, we have the way Jesus is portrayed in the stained glass windows at Knox Church Dunedin New Zealand. Who do you say Jesus is?

<https://theconversation.com/jesus-wasnt-white-he-was-a-brown-skinned-middle-eastern-jew-heres-why-that-matters-91230>

Hymn

(tune Little Cornard) TIS 469 - Basil E Bridge

1 This is the truth we hold,
source of the joy we share,
hope that can make us bold
trusting the name we bear:
that 'Christ has died' and 'Christ is
risen, in Christ shall all be made alive'.

2 This is the song of praise
echoing down the years,
true for the present days,
through all our doubt and fears:
that 'Christ has died' and 'Christ is
risen, in Christ shall all be made alive'.

3 Christ is the living bread,
Christ is the word to speak,
Christ is the way to tread,
Christ is the goal to seek;
for 'Christ has died' and 'Christ is risen,
in Christ shall all be made alive'.

4 One in the faith we share,
out in his name we go;
Jesus awaits us there,
longing that all should know
that 'Christ has died' and 'Christ is
risen, in Christ shall all be made alive'.

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.**

Hymn

(tune Angelus) AA 156 - Colin Gibson

1 Where the road runs out and the
signposts end,
where we come to the edge of today,
be the God of Abraham for us,
send us out upon our way.
*Lord, you were our beginning,
the faith that gave us birth.
We look to you, our ending,
our hope for heaven and earth.*

3 When the clouds are low and the wind
is strong,
when tomorrow's storm draws near,
be the spirit bird hovering overhead
who will take away our fear. *[Refrain]*

2 When the coast is left and we journey
on
to the rim of the sky and the sea,
be the sailor's friend, be the dolphin
Christ,
lead us on to eternity. *[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 “*Festival Toccata*” Percy Fletcher (1892-1932)

Serving today

Leader of worship – Kerry Enright

Children and youth ministries – Jordan Redding

Organist and Choir Director – Karen Knudson

Reader – Moira Thompson

Leader in prayer – Ahi Kā

Welcoming team – David Richardson’s team

Counting team – Howard Smith’s team

There is a **hearing loop system** for people with hearing aids.

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.*