



# KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

## Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

10am – Sunday 30 August 2020

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Music to prepare us for worship

*"Chaconne in D minor"*, J Pachelbel (1653-1706)

played by Karen Knudson

### The bell sounds, quietness, welcome

**Music of approach** *"With Verdure clad"* from *'The Creation'*, Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Calla Knudson-Hollebon/ soprano

### 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.**

Give thanks to God with all your hearts.

**We will hold nothing back from God.**

Give spirited praise to God.

**We will join with all God's people in giving thanks for God's abiding love.**

Glorify God and that Word we know as Jesus Christ.

**We will worship our God with wonder and joy.**

### Hymn

(tune Highwood)

1 Eternal God, your love's tremendous  
glory  
cascades through life in overflowing  
grace,  
to tell creation's meaning in the story  
of love evolving love from time and  
space.

3 Eternal Spirit, with us like a mother,  
embracing us in love serene and pure:  
you nurture strength to follow Christ  
our brother,  
as full-grown children, confident and  
sure.

2 Eternal Son of God, uniquely  
precious,  
in you, deserted, scorned, crucified,  
God's love has fathomed sin and  
death's deep darkness,  
and flawed humanity is glorified.

## 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** *"If God be for us, who can be against us"* from *'The Messiah'*, J S Bach (1685-1750)

Calla Knudson-Hollebon/ soprano

## Children

### Hymn

(CM St Peter) GtG 316 - trans. Omer Westendorf

1 Where charity and love prevail,  
there God is ever found;  
brought here together by Christ's  
love,  
by love are we thus are bound.

2 Let us recall that in our midst  
dwells Christ, God's holy Son.  
As members of each body joined,  
in him we are made one.

3 Let us forgive each other's faults  
as we our own confess,  
that we may love each other well  
in Christian gentleness.

4 Love can exclude no race or creed  
if honoured be God's name;  
our common life embraces all  
whose Maker is the same.

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

### Romans 12:9-21

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

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

## Matthew 16: 21-28

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

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

### Reflection "Was it necessary?"

The picture from Gulliver's Travels portrays Gulliver tied down by Lilliputians. A person secured by many small ropes. Today Peter imagines that Jesus is going to be tied down and he is determined to keep Jesus free. But the story unfolds in a way that makes us ask, who really is the free one. Let's remember the background.

Last week we heard Peter say of Jesus: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God." Jesus affirmed what Peter said – "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah ... I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church ... and I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven ... " Those verses present Peter as a rock on which the church will be built. What a contrast today! For when Jesus begins to show that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering and be killed and on the third day be raised, Peter said "God forbid it Lord! This must never happen to you." And Jesus replies "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block for me ..." In just a few verses Peter has gone from rock star to stumbling block.

Perhaps Peter imagined Jesus would continue the Galilean ministry, and Peter didn't want Jesus to be tied to suffering and death. That didn't happen to Messiahs and Sons of God. Now Jesus made a startling response, calling Peter Satan. Was Jesus unfair on Peter? After all, this is the first time in Matthew's gospel that Jesus speaks of his forthcoming crucifixion. And although he was to predict it three more times, Peter didn't know that. And yet, Jesus uses this very strong language. Something is at stake. Now Peter was not the first one who suggested that Jesus not be pinned down, wouldn't suffer because of his commitments. Early in the gospel, there are the temptations. The devil said - . If you are the Son of God, turn this stone to bread. Instant food for the rest of your days. You don't need to starve. And ... If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down and - God will bear you up. Total freedom to live as you want. And ... All these kingdoms of the world and their splendour can be yours. You will be able to make the world as you want it. But Jesus turned from such temptations. He chose the way of being pinned down.

And so we come to the gospel today. At the beginning, a crucial sentence... "From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priest and scribes and be killed, and on the third day be raised." Matthew says that Jesus must go to Jerusalem and suffer and be killed. Notice that there is no expression of grief, no beating of the breast, no lamenting at the prospects, no attention grabbing about the tragedy. There is here a clear eyed embracing of a horrible future as the cost of following the Way. Psychiatric studies might suggest Jesus has a death wish or a martyr complex. Whereas Matthew is more straightforward ... Jesus must go to Jerusalem. What are we to make of the word "must"? In Biblical thought, strange as it may seem to us, once an event is over, the result of that event is often viewed as having been the purpose of it from the beginning. Even after a tragedy, biblical writers are able to say that from the beginning it was to be so. It

was said of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. It was said of Paul's call to mission that he had been set apart from his mother's womb. And so it is said that the outcome of the ministry of Jesus was to be crucifixion. We would not say that, but they did. But perhaps we have deeper issues with the word "must" for it poses a threat to a prized possession, believing that we are free to choose our paths and our destinies. For to say I must do this or I must do that sounds too burdensome, too confining, too heavy. We who have been reared on the principles of self-expression and self-assertion and self-fulfilment, especially in the realm of spirituality, find it too limiting. Isn't spirituality about self-expression? Do what expresses your true self, what makes you feel good, what fills you with happiness. Whereas religion carries the connotation of obligation and imposition and form. The idea that we must worship or belong to a congregation, for example, seems too much to ask.

Yet if everything we did depended on us feeling good about it or feeling that it expressed who we were, much of our society would grind to a halt. Much of what we do involves turning up even when we don't want to turn up, and perhaps the most transformative experiences of our lives have been when we had to turn up against our inclination. Fred Craddock writes of Madame Curie, pioneer in the field of science, who isolated radium and with that breakthrough opened many new avenues in the field of medicine. With frostbitten toes out there in the shed, with inadequate food, no financial support, working night and day, through tons of rock, to isolate this one element. Step out there in the shed and ask her about it – "Are you having a good time, Madame Curie? Isn't science wonderful?" Or Jesus – "Jesus some of us have been thinking of having a picnic in the Garden of Gethsemane. We understand it's nice there. Do you recommend it?" And he says – "I have not come to do as I please; I have come to do the will of the one who sent me." These are people who did what they had to do.

As long as everything is optional, as long as we spend our energies protecting all our alternatives, as long as we spend our days avoiding being tied down, we will achieve very little. Can you think of meeting someone who made a significant difference? You might have noticed one thing about that person. She possessed a sense of having something she had to do. To others she may have looked burdened, even obsessed. But to herself, her joy is in knowing her work is more important than how she happens to feel about it on any given day or in any given decade. The one who is tied to a call is the one who is most free. There is an old hymn – "Make me a captive Lord and then I shall be free ..." And so it is said - "From this time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised." To us Jesus says – "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."

Note: this sermon uses and adapts some ideas from a sermon by Fred Craddock.

## Hymn

(tune O Waly Waly) CH4 402 - Charles Everest

1 'Take up your cross,' the Saviour  
said,  
'if you would my disciple be;  
take up your cross, with willing heart,  
and humbly follow after me.'

3 Take up your cross, nor heed the  
shame,  
and let your foolish pride be still:  
the Lord refused not even to die  
upon a cross, on Calvary's hill.

2 Take up your cross; let not its weight  
fill your weak soul with vain alarm:  
his strength shall bear your spirit up,  
and brace your heart, and nerve your  
arm.

## 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 Crucifer) AA 87 - Shirley Murray

*Lift high the cross, the love of Christ  
proclaim  
till all the world adore his glorious  
name!*

1 Come, Christian people, sing your  
praises, shout!  
If we are silent, even stones cry out.  
[Refrain]

2 Jesus, you wept to see our human  
strife,  
teach us compassion for each  
human life. [Refrain]

3 Peace was your plea and peace  
your loving theme  
let peace be our passport, peace a  
living dream. [Refrain]

4 Great is the cost of walking on this  
road,  
to follow and suffer with the Son of  
God. [Refrain]

5 Worlds to be born and children yet  
to be  
come, take up this song into  
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 "Going Home", Anton Dvorak (1841-1904)

## **Serving today**

Leader of worship – Kerry Enright

Children and youth ministries – Jordan Redding

Organist and Choir Director – Karen Knudson

Reader – Neil Grant

Prayer for others – Robert Paterson

Welcoming team – Helen Thew's team

Counting team – Roy Somerville'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](mailto: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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Art retrieved from <http://www.servicioskoinonia.org/cerezo/dibujosA/45OrdinarioA22.jpg>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJilqJoQG-c> [retrieved 28 August, 2020]