



KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

10am – Sunday 9 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, quietness, welcome

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

Call to worship

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

Ma Ihowa koe e manaaki. May God bless you.

The Spirit of God gave the universe birth.

The Spirit of God delivered the world.

God is the first; God is the last.

No other god declares the word of creation.

Yet this same God invites us, saying, "Do not be afraid!"

Worship the One who banishes fear, who comforts the trembling and quickens the faint!

Worship the One whose creation is renewed and whose creatures are never forsaken!

Hymn

1 Jesus calls us here to meet him
as, through word and song and prayer,
we affirm God's promised presence
where his people live and care.
Praise the God who keeps his promise;
praise the Son who calls us friends;
praise the Spirit who, among us,
to our hopes and fears attends.

(tune Lewis Folk Melody) CH4 510 - John Bell & Graham Maule

2 Jesus calls us to confess him
Word of life and Lord of all,
sharer of our flesh and frailness ,
saving all who fail or fall.
Tell his holy human story;
tell his tales that all may hear;
tell the world that Christ in glory
came to earth to meet us here.

3 Jesus calls us to his table
rooted firm in time and space,
where the Church in earth and heaven
finds a common meeting place.
Share the bread and wine, his body;
share the love of which we sing;
share the feast for saints and sinners
hosted by our Lord and King.

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)

Christ Walks on Water; Peter’s rescue from the Lake Galilee, Herbert Boeckl; *Disciples See Christ Walking on the Water*, Henry Tanner; *Christ Walks on Water*, Cerezo Barredo

Children

Hymn

(tune Skye Boat Song) CH4 600 -

*Spirit of God, unseen as the wind,
gentle as is the dove,
teach us the truth and help us believe,
show us the Saviour’s love.*

2 Without your help we fail our Lord,
we cannot live his way;
we need your power, we need your
strength,
following Christ each day.

1 You spoke to us long, long ago,
gave us the written word;
we read it still, needing its truth,
through it God’s voice is heard.
[Refrain]

[Refrain]

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

Romans 10:5-15

Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that "the person who does these things will live by them." But the righteousness that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is

Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

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

Matthew 14:22-33

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

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

Reflection "A believing that doesn't wash away"

What might so undermine your faith that it washes away? Might it be a series of personal tragedies? Betrayal by someone you relied on? Abuse by a person you trusted? Might it be that the church's discrimination against LGBTQI people finally becomes too much? Might it be that you have given up hope for God's vision for the world including nuclear disarmament 75 years after Nagasaki and Hiroshima, or for peace on the Korean peninsula 70 years after the war began? Might it be nothing that you can name or put your finger on, but one day you find faith and hope have just evaporated?

When I was a student for the ministry leading worship in the little wooden church in beautiful Whitianga, we were part way through the service and a person stood up and said, audibly, I just don't believe any more, and she walked out. When I went to visit her later she said ... I realised that I was just pretending and I didn't want to pretend any longer. Something had woken her up and made her connect her outer life with her inner life. Better that than pretending, do you think? And yet, in this week of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I keep thinking of the Reverend Ian Dixon, former Assistant Minister here, who was a chaplain in J-force at the end of World War Two and went to the cities not long after the bomb was dropped. He said that he was so affected by the inhumanity of it all that he lost his faith for a year and had to borrow it from others. More often it is drift, isn't it? A person who was instrumental in me coming to faith got busy as a lawyer, long hours, grabbing weekends away when he could, and well, faith just couldn't find room. It's hard to see that in friends who were influential in your own faith development.

Faith is fluid and flows, and it flows along with hope and prayer and learning and conversing and worshipping. And, it can flow away.

What might we say to help people when we see this beginning to happen?

It doesn't help to say, it doesn't really matter. Because it does. What we believe, what we trust, what we hope for, makes all the difference in the world. If we put our trust in the God revealed in Jesus Christ, we hope for the world God is bringing and the peace God intends. We develop a wholistic view of life, and gain a sense of our own place and true value. We are led to treat creation with the respect it needs and to live within its bounds. We learn how to value the rights of others especially those most vulnerable and to

persevere towards the world God is bringing. The American commentator David Brooks has written of how coming to faith upended what he lived for and made him realise the significance of relationships. The book he wrote before becoming a follower feels different to the one he wrote afterwards. Very different.

And it doesn't work to pretend someone has faith when they don't. I have heard people say, everyone is a Christian aren't they? A Christian is a person who seeks to follow Jesus and in New Zealand a small percentage want to live that way. Christians are not better or worse than anyone else, but they are different.

And it doesn't work to try to answer every intellectual question people might have. A lively faith generates more questions than we can ever answer, and those questions are for pursuing so we can go deeper in our understanding and wider in our connecting. I have heard people say – I can no longer believe in the resurrection. So which resurrection don't you believe in? And when they tell me, I often don't believe in that resurrection either. Or I don't believe in a god who controls everything that happens. Well, that is good, because that god would not be a Christian god. Or I don't believe in a heaven up there. Well that is good because you won't find that in the Bible. What people doubt are often popular understandings rather than the Christian faith itself. Christian faith often dismantles popular belief. And questions about that faith do not reflect less faith, but rather that our faith is so alive that it keeps generating questions.

Faith is trust, leaning into, moving towards, continually being reoriented. The opposite of faith is not doubt but cynicism and suspicion and fear and despair and resignation and fatalism. And the biggest threat to faith is not doubt but complacency and sometimes boredom.

There is a New Zealand hymn from Colin Gibson: "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. Lord you were our beginning, the faith that gave us birth. We look to you, our ending, our hope for heaven and earth."

The gospel today is about faith amid tempest, trust amid the storm. Barbara Brown Taylor in speaking of this passage says – "If you want to walk on water, you have to get out of the boat. True enough. And here and there, now and again, the church maybe needs visionary and courageous folks who step out in faith to do some new and bold thing. But maybe there are far more times when life in the "boat" that is the church involves no more than faithfully pulling on your oar against the winds that howl, believing that Jesus is near, and so pressing on. You press on in faith not because you've tested Jesus and found that he lived up to all the hype and not because Jesus has enabled you yourself to do something quite grand and eye-catching. No, you press on because you believe Jesus when, through the Spirit, you hear him say, "Chin up! It is I! Don't be afraid!" So keep pulling on that oar!"

Faith is sometimes awakened amid circumstances that are wild and threatening. As in the story, Jesus doesn't turn up when we demand him to turn up or in a form we will automatically recognise. The centre of this story is not the struggles of the disciples. The centre of the story is that Jesus is always moving towards us. As Debie Thomas says, Jesus moving towards us is "constant, focused, relentless, and uni-directional. From the very beginning of the story, Jesus moves towards his disciples. He moves towards them when they're struggling at sea. He moves towards them when they decide he's a menacing ghost. He moves towards them when they're terrified by his approach. He moves towards them when they're reckless enough to set him a dare. He moves towards them when they begin to drown. He moves towards them when they ask for help. He moves towards them when they're shivering and sorry for their rashness. He moves towards them when they realize — for a beautiful, flickering instant — who he is and what he is. He moves towards them when they worship him. In other words, Jesus never stops moving towards the ones he loves. And he says "Take courage. It is I. Don't be afraid."

Hymn

(8787D) GtG 498 - Herman Stuempfle, jr.

1 Loaves were broken, words were spoken by the Galilean shore.

Jesus, Bread of Life from heaven, was their food forever more.

*By your body broken for us,
by your wine of life outpoured,
Jesus feed again your people.
Be our Host, our Life, our Lord.*

2 Loaves were broken, words were spoken in a quiet room one night.

In the bread and wine you gave them, Christ, you came as Light from Light.

[Refrain]

3 Loaves are broken, words are spoken, as in faith we gather here.

Jesus speaks across the ages:

“I am with you; do not fear!”

[Refrain]

4 By the loaves you break and give us, send us in your name to share, bread for which the millions hunger, words that tell your love and care.

[Refrain]

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.**

Communion

Music “My peace I leave you” music from Taize

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right Loving God ... song of the Church on earth and in heaven:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.

And now, lest we believe ... Take it, all of you, to remember me.'

Jesus, firstborn of Mary, **have mercy on us**

Jesus, Saviour of the world, **have mercy on us**

Jesus, monarch of heaven, **grant us peace.**

Hymn

(tune Kingsfold) TiS 262 - Brian Wren

1 When pain and terror strike by
chance,
with causes unexplained,
when God seems absent or asleep,
and evil unrestrained,
we crave an all-controlling force
ready to rule and warn,
but find, far-shadowed by a cross,
a child in weakness born.

2 How deep the Wisdom of our God
how weak, but truly wise,
to risk, to sacrifice, to die,
and from the grave arise,
to shed the shroud of death and fate,
freeing our hearts for good.
We breathe the ample air of hope
and take our chance with God.

3 Since Wisdom took its chance on
earth,
to show God's living way,
we'll trust that fear and force will fail,
and Wisdom win the day.
Then come, dear Christ, and hold us
fast
when faith and hope are torn,
and bring us, in your loving arms,
to resurrection morn.

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.*

Closing

Christ's food in our souls, **our food shared like his.** Christ's life in our hands, **our lives shaped by his.** Christ's love in our hearts, **our love warmed through his.** Christ's peace on our path, **our path following his.**

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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