



# KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

## Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost Te Wiki o te Reo Maori - Communion

10am – Sunday 13 September 2020

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Music to prepare us for worship “*Passacaglia*”, Bryan Kelly (b. 1934); “*Andante*” from *Organ Symphony*,  
Camille Saint-Saëns (1886) Karen Knudson/organ

### The bell sounds, quietness, welcome

**Music of approach** “*Tēnei tonu mātou Arohaina mai/ We wait for thy loving Kindness*”,  
music William McKie (1901–84) Jesse Hanan/ Tenor soloist

### Call to worship (from Ps. 103)

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

**Ma Ihowa koe e manaaki. May God bless you.**

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless God's holy name.

**Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all God's benefits,**

Who forgives all your sins and heals you of all your diseases,

**Who crowns you with love and mercy and brings justice to all who are  
oppressed.**

Let us worship God.

### Hymn

(tune Dunedin) AA 155 - Shirley Murray

1 Where mountains rise to open skies  
your name, O God, is echoed far,  
from island beach to kauri's reach,  
in water's light, in lake and star.

2 Your people's heart, your people's part  
be in our caring for this land,  
for faith to flower, for aroha  
to let each other's mana stand.

3 From broken word, from conflict  
stirred,  
from lack of vision, set us free  
to see the line of your design,  
to feel creation's energy.

4 Your love be known, compassion  
shown,  
that every child have equal scope:  
in justice done, in trust begun  
shall be our heritage and hope.

5 Where mountains rise to open skies  
your way of peace distil the air,  
your spirit bind all humankind,  
one covenant of life to share!

## 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 all. **And also with you.**

## Music and Art *"Laudate Dominum/ Praise the Lord"*, W A Mozart (1756-91)

Calla Knudson-Hollebon/ Soprano soloist

*Apology from the "wall of shame", mural created after the riots in the city of Vancouver after the Stanley Cup loss in 2011; Hands Across the Divide, Maurice Harron*

## Children

### Song

WOV 633 - Traditional Maori hymn

1 Tama ngakau marie, Tama a t'Atua  
tenei tonu matou, arohaina mai.

3 Takahia ki raro, tau e kino ai;  
Kei pa kaha tonu, ko nga mahi he.

2 Murua ra nga hara. Wetekina mai  
Enei here kino, whakararu nei.

4 Homai he aroha, mou i mate nei.  
Tenei ra, e Ihu, takina e koe.

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

### Romans 14:1-12

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand. Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God. We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

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

## Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times." For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

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

## Reflection "Forgiveness"

A seven year old boy was riding between his two older brothers in the back seat of the family car. Suddenly, their mother, drained and distraught from the experience of her husband's abandonment, reached over the front seat and slammed the seven year old across the face with her hand. "You! The only reason I had you," she screamed, "was to keep your father. I never wanted you! I hate you! The scene was indelibly engraved in the child's memory. Over the years, the mother reinforced the sincerity of those remarks by praising the older sons and by unnecessarily and continually finding fault and blame with the youngest one. The youngest faithfully sought the mother's approval and blessing, but it never came.

Years later, the depth of his resentment, hurt and anger became clearer. For years, it was he who remained devoted to his mother, cared for her, did the many chores around the house willingly and lovingly only to be rejected at every turn. He wondered if he could ever forgive her. He knew he wanted to try because the resentment and hurt he felt gnawed at him relentlessly and he found himself emotionally imprisoned.

Doris Donnelly was a teacher and counsellor. She saw the son many months after he made the decision to forgive. "I can't tell you how many times in the last twenty three years I have relived the scene as a boy in the car", he said. "Thousands, probably. But recently, while I was reliving it, I put myself in my mother's place for a change. Here she was, a high school graduate with no money, no job and a family of four to support. I realised how powerless, lonely, hurt and depressed she must have felt. I thought of the anger, fear, the pain that must have been there. And I thought of how much I must have reminded her of the failure of all her young hopes. It was the beginning of my forgiveness of her.

"I debated," he continued, "whether to tell her any of this. I prayed. My forgiveness deepened and so did my desire to talk with her about this and I finally did. I was not sure I could find the right words, and above all, I did not want her to feel guilty. I told her that I understood and I loved her. We wept in each other's arms for what seemed like hours. It was the beginning of a new life for me. For us."<sup>17</sup>

Forgiveness is not easy. It takes time. It needs empathy.

The slave had been forgiven a ridiculously large amount, 10,000 talents. A talent was the largest denomination of money in the ancient world. 10,000 talents was fifteen year's salary 10,000 times over. 100 million days wages for the average worker. So this was an absurd debt. Never repayable. Incalculable. Which is surely part of Jesus' answer to Peter's question. "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?"

One of the online commentators on this passage said to one of his colleagues, humorously - "Well, Caroline, on my phone I have a sinned against me app that calculates how many times I have been sinned against, and it tells me that you have sinned against me 75 times, and there is only two more before I need to stop forgiving you." Life is not for counting the times people sin against us or hurt us or harm us. It is not for counting how much I need to forgive. Forgiveness and the need for forgiveness cannot be calculated. We do not live transactionally as if when we do something, the other person must respond. We do not determine how God acts or how others must act. So God snaps what shackles us to the past. We are freed from victimhood.

Lutheran minister Nadia Bolz-Weber speaks about the power of forgiveness to free us for justice.

"Maybe retaliation or holding onto anger about the harm done to me doesn't actually combat evil. Maybe it feeds it. Because in the end, if we're not careful, we can actually absorb the worst of our enemy, and at some level, start to become them. So what if forgiveness, rather than being a pansy way to say, 'It's okay,' is actually a way of wielding bolt-cutters, and snapping the chains that link us? What if it's saying, 'What you did was so not okay, I refuse to be connected to it anymore.'? Forgiveness is about being a freedom fighter. And free people are dangerous people. Free people aren't controlled by the past. Free people laugh more than others. Free people see beauty where others do not. Free people are not easily offended. Free people are unafraid to speak truth to stupid. Free people are not chained to resentments. And that's worth fighting for."<sup>2</sup>

That kind of forgiveness doesn't just happen. It needs the encouragement of a forgiving community.

Before coming here, I was involved with an agency that had a programme called Young Ambassadors for Peace. It operated in many parts of the world, including in the Solomon Islands after the Malaita conflict, among fighting clans in the highlands of Papua New Guinea, and with Muslims and Christians in Ambon, Indonesia.

In 1999, that area was decimated by violence. At least 5,000 people killed and 700 thousand people displaced. Temples and churches destroyed in a cycle of retribution. Young Ambassadors for Peace brought young Muslim and Christian people together. I attended one of their week long courses. Part involved burning prejudices in a big urn. At the end of the week, we sat in a circle and when we felt able to commit to peace, we each lit a candle and placed it in front of us. It was nearly at the end when a young Muslim man, just could not do it. Angrily, he swiped the lit candles around him and refused to participate. Instantly, the young Muslim people around him rushed to him and hugged him. For a long time, they held him in love. They spoke words of deep affection. Tears flowed. And he returned to the circle. We started the process again. And with his friends sitting beside him, he lit his candle. The practice of forgiveness needs nourishing by a community that practices it, that holds us in love, especially when the wounds are deep.

This meal is a reminder of God's incalculable love, a love that draws people together in forgiveness. It is not easy. It takes time. And it sets us free. God, may you live it in us and among us, we pray. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> From Doris Donnelly *Putting Forgiveness Into Practice* 1982 Argus Publications Allen Texas

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Journey with Jesus <https://www.journeywithjesus.net/lectionary-essays/current-essay?id=2748>

## Hymn

(tune Horsley) GtG 444 - Rosamond Herklots

1 “Forgive our sins as we forgive,”  
you taught us Lord, to pray,  
but you alone can grant us grace to  
live the words we say.

2 How can your pardon reach and  
bless the unforgiving heart  
that broods on wrongs and will not  
let old bitterness depart?

3 In blazing light your cross reveals  
the truth we dimly knew:  
what trivial debts are owed to us,  
how great our debt to you!

4 Lord, cleanse the depths within  
our souls and bid resentment cease.  
Then, by your mercy reconciled, our  
lives will spread your peace.

## Prayer for others and the Lord’s Prayer

*Anglican prayer book*

**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

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

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

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

...

**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**

**Hosanna in the highest**

*“O taste and see how gracious the Lord is”*, music Ralph Vaughan-Williams, Grace Togneri and Sara Hubbard/ soloists; *“Ave Verum/ One body”* Thomas Tallis (1505-85)

## Hymn

(tune Leoni) GtG 445 - Ruth Duck

1 God, how can we forgive when bonds of love are torn?  
How can we rise and start anew, our trust reborn?  
When human loving fails and every hope is gone,  
your love gives strength beyond our own to face the dawn.

2 When we have missed the mark, and tears of anguish flow,  
how can you still release our guilt, the debt we owe?  
The ocean depth of grace surpasses all our needs.  
A priest who shares our human pain, Christ intercedes.

3 Who dares to throw the stone to damn another's sin,  
when you, while knowing all our past, forgive again?  
No more we play the judge, for by your grace we live.  
As you, O God, forgive our sin, may we forgive.

**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

(tune Old 100th) GtG 679 - Traditional Maori hymn

1 Ma te marie a te Atua  
Tatou katoa e tiaki;  
Mana ano e whakau  
O tatou ngakau ki te pai

2 Ma te Atua Tamaiti ra,  
Ma te Wairua Tapu hoki,  
Ratou, Atua kotahi nei.  
Tatou katoa e whakapai.

Music for our leaving *“Postlude Cantique”* from *'7 Petites Pieces pour Orgue'*, Theodore Dubois (1837-1924)

Peter Stockwell/ organ

## Serving today

Minister – Kerry Enright

Organist and Choir Director – Karen Knudson

Reader – John Rough

Prayers – Rachel Tombs

Welcoming team – Helen Thew's team

Counting team – Roy Somerville's team

*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.*

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