



KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

Kirkin' o' the tartan

10am – Sunday 22 November 2020

Music to prepare us for worship "*Sundance*" Bob Chilcott - played by Grace Togneri

"*Verset on Brother James Air*" Noel Rawsthorne (1928-2019); "*Martyrs*" Godfrey Ridout & George Thalben-Ball

Welcome

The Processing in of the Clans

Hymn

(tune: Highland Cathedral CH4 336) - words: v 1-3 Leith Fisher, 4 Margaret Garland

1 Christ is our light! The bright and
morning star
covering with radiance all from near
and far.
Christ be our light, shine on, shine on
we pray
into our hearts, into our world today.

2 Christ is our love! Baptized that we
may know
the love of God among us, swooping
low.
Christ be our love, bring us to turn our
face
and see in you the light of heaven's
embrace.

3 Christ is our joy! Transforming
wedding guest!
Through water turned to wine the
feast was blessed.
Christ be our joy; your glory let us see,
As your disciples did in Galilee.

4 Christ is our hope! The fullness of our
days
leading us onwards as we seek new
ways.
Christ be our hope, our trust, our
guiding light
peace in our hearts throughout the
darkest night.

Call to worship

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

Ma Ihowa koe e manaaki. May God bless you.

Christ Jesus is our light, forever and forever.

**Our lives are lifted towards bright hopes
and made clearer as we come close to love.**

Christ Jesus is our peace, forever and forever,

**Our strife and our brokenness are made whole
in the holy life that stands near.**

Christ Jesus is our hope, forever and forever

In Christ we live and breathe and have our being.

Thanks be to God. Amen

A Psalm of Praise

Ps 100 in Standard Scots read by Linda Holloway

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing.

Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his, we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gate with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him, bless his name.

For the Lord is good: his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Choir Introit *“Londonderry Air - O breath of life”* arr. Bob Chilcott

Mark Bevin/piano, Carolyn Schmid/organ

Prayer, Assurance of Forgiveness

E te whanau, in Christ we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God.**

We share the peace of Christ

Kia tau tonu te rangimarie o te Karaiti kia koutou: the peace of Christ be with you:

And also with you. *we exchange a sign of peace with each other*

Children

Hymn

(tune: Thainaky CH4 593) - words[©]: John L Bell & Graham Maule

1 Christ is coming! let creation
from her groans and travail cease;
let the glorious proclamation
hope restore and faith increase:
Christ is coming! Christ is coming!
Come now, blessèd Prince of Peace.

3 Long your exiles have been pining,
far from you, and rest, and home:
but, in heavenly glory shining,
soon their loving Lord shall come:
Christ is coming! Christ is coming!
Haste the joyous jubilee.

2 Earth can now but tell the story
of your bitter cross and pain;
she shall yet behold your glory,
Lord, when you return to reign:
Christ is coming! Christ is coming!
'Come, Lord Jesus, come again!'

4 With that blessèd hope before us,
harps be played and songs be sung;
let the mighty advent chorus
onward roll from tongue to tongue:
'Christ is coming! Christ is coming!
Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come!'

Readings – listening to God’s word for us:

(see insert)

First reading: Ezekiel 34:11-16

read in Gaelic by Alison Thornton

For thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

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

Gospel reading: Matthew 25:31-40

read in Lowland Scots by Peter Matheson

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

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

Anthem "Amazing Grace" Luc Jakobs

Jack Hanan/soloist, Mark Bevin/piano

Sermon

We pray: O God may we hear your word for us this day, with open ears and willing hearts. And may we respond to your grace generously and fully as we seek to be your people here in this community and beyond. Amen

Picture this – 1853, a family – waiting on the dock by the Clyde, waiting to board the ship that would take them forever from their beloved land away to the other side of the world. They had memories of their life in the highlands – it was in their blood if not under their feet these past generations. Now this seemed like the right thing to do – even if the journey was somewhat perilous, even if they knew little of what awaited them – it seemed right, their one chance of a new beginning, of a life away from the uncompromising hopelessness. With their belongings at their feet, the family waited. And while they waited the woman pulled out the one thing that they had chosen to leave other things behind for. She opened her bible and it fell to the reading from Ezekiel – and she read these words:

For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.

She breathed again. She was held in the promise of God with every fibre of her being. Her shoulders came back, her head up and her gaze fixed on the future with some hope. It was enough for now.

Have you wondered, about what it is like for those who travel to a new land – for Maori, the first people of Aotearoa, sailing south to a new beginning, finding this speck of an island in the midst of the vast ocean. For the early European arrivals, the whalers and sealers, the missionaries and the surveyors. For the families that came to prepare the way for the 'first' ships – I always have a wry smile when I hear the phrase! For the settlers, rich and poor, eager and apprehensive, what was it like? What was it like to leave, and what was it like to arrive?

We find it hard to imagine the farewells as they would have been in the 19 century and earlier – because they were pretty much final farewells, no hope of returning, of popping across to see family every couple of years (although we might have a slightly better understanding having experienced 2020!)

For those who came from Scotland to New Zealand as part of the Free Church settlement of this southern land, I imagine that the passage from Ezekiel would have resonated. The people had seen injustice, division, the scattering of their communities and the breakdown of clanship. Spread to the four corners of the earth, for many Scots the words Ezekiel spoke from the reality of exile in Babylon to the scattered and dispossessed Hebrews in the 6th century BC would have seemed very relevant indeed.

Ezekiel is speaking words of hope. Lamenting the way in which the shepherds of Israel had turned from caring for their flocks to looking to their own ends, he preaches God's presence and guarding for each of the flock wherever they may be. And maybe as the people listened, maybe they too breathed again, held in the promise of God, maybe their shoulders came back, heads came up and they reclaimed hope for the future. And it was enough, for then!

Ezekiel then speaks of God's judgement on the leaders of the people of Israel for failing their flock. It doesn't sound too good for them to be honest. But he also reminds the people, the flock, that God expects much of them too. In this new place, says Ezekiel, do not become like the ones that have failed God and you. Be instead the breath of God for each other, be not selfish or thoughtless or uncaring of others. You must live the promise of God that is in you every day – and if you do, you will look upon the face of God at the end with peace in your heart.

Jesus lays it out the same message in the Gospel of Matthew – an expectation that the people of God will live in close relationship with God, living out the promise of love and reconciliation. And it is interesting to note that Matthew places this passage as the culmination of Jesus teaching, just before the anointing of Jesus, the last supper, his arrest.... this passage has real significance and we are to pay attention to that I believe! The lectionary compilers thought so too. Today is the final one of the church year – the last Sunday before Advent – a time for gathering the threads of Jesus' teaching together into the 'this is the message I want you to remember.' There is, too, a sense of utter simplicity and of finality in this gospel passage – of end times and judgement for sure yet also a final reminder of how we are to live out in a very practical way the presence of love that is Jesus Christ.

So Jesus final words of teaching are about how we are to care for one another – not because we live in fear of judgement but because when we are held in the promise of God-with-us and we can do no other. In Babylon or Jerusalem or Glasgow or Dunedin our God given purpose is to find the hungry and the homeless and the imprisoned and the unloved and the sick and to be Jesus hands and feet serving them. It is a simple message and we are to pay attention to it.

We are called to action in the name of love and justice. We are called as the people of God to love each other as we are the beloved of God. That surety of belonging will wither and die if we do not share that gift, that blessing, that certainty of not being alone, of being loved, with our world, our aching, broken world. For there is need.

It is 1853, December in this new Edinburgh. A woman sits on the plank bench staring out to the water, wondering how to do this. The hope and assurance found on the banks of the Clyde is still there but overlaid by the shock of it all. She never imagined the loneliness, she is tired and dispirited and missing home. One day maybe she will settle but it is almost Christmas and she misses her family desperately.

And the sun is shining, its warm and the trees and wildflowers are in full bloom – what kind of Christmas is that? And so she does what she always does when she is troubled. She picks up her bible – this time it is the Gospel of Matthew that falls open to her – she knows this passage well and is pleased to be reminded. She had been too much immersed in herself and her family, not seeing the rest of the ‘new world’ around her. Goodness there are so many people who could do with her help. She has only been here six months and yet she has so much she can offer the newcomers. A cuppa, a word of advice, a shoulder. And she suspects that they could bring new life to her – stories of home, fresh ideas, shared troubles. After all this is a community of people not matter where you are. There are still the rascals and the religious, the visionaries and administrators and doers and dreamers. Her bible, she knows, is still her rock, and Jesus is still her saviour and there is still work to be done in this new and strange land.

And so she sits there for a moment longer, and she finds she can breathe again, held in the promise of God before she gets up and takes some food to the family down the muddy path. She has hope for the future in this new beginning.

It is November 2020 in Ōtepoti Dunedin. It has been a difficult year, many of us are struggling at being part of a journey we did not willingly set out on. It is like we have left our safe harbour and the way forward is unknown. Yet as a people of faith we take a moment to look around and know our blessings. We have loving community. We have democracy – no small thing these days. And then we look around us to the scared and the lonely, the acts of injustice and the trampling of the vulnerable and we be Christ’s voice, hands, and love wherever we can – because we can do no other. There is much to do, people to love, justices to pursue, mouths to feed and hands to hold in this new place, this unexpected new beginning. We are to pay attention to others as God attends to us.

So let us look to our living, our future with hope in the transforming presence of God with us

Let us take time to breathe in the presence of God. To be held in the promise of God with every fibre of our being. Let us look to the future with hope and let us be that hope to this hurting and broken world in every way we can. Let us be enough we pray. Amen

Hymn

1 Christ's is the world in which we move,
Christ's are the folk we're summoned to
love,

Christ's is the voice which calls us to care,
and Christ is the one who meets us here.

To the lost Christ shows his face;

To the unloved he gives his embrace;

To those who cry in pain or disgrace,

*Christ makes, with his friends, a touching
place.*

2 Feel for the people we most avoid,
Strange or bereaved or never employed;
Feel for the women, and feel for the men
Who fear that their living is all in vain.

[Refrain]

(tune: Dream Angus CH4 724) - words[©]: The Iona Community

3 Feel for the parents who've lost their
child

Feel for the women whom men have
defiled,

Feel for the baby for whom there's no
breast,

And feel for the weary who find no rest.

[Refrain]

4 Feel for the lives by life confused,
Riddled with doubt, in loving abused;
Feel for the lonely heart, conscious of sin,
Which longs to be pure but fears to
begin. [Refrain]

Prayer for others and the Lord's Prayer

led by Helen Thew

...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 i 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.

Acknowledging the Tartans

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.*

Hymn

1 The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
in pastures green, he leadeth me
the quiet waters by.

2 My soul he doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
ev'n for his own name's sake.

3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
yet will I fear no ill:
for thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

(tune: Crimond CH4 154) - Psalm 23 from *Scottish Psalter*

4 My table thou hast furnished
in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.

5 Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me:
and in God's house for evermore
my dwelling-place shall be.

Sending out and Benediction

The Processing out of the Clans

Blessing "*O for a closer walk with God*" Scottish hymn, arr. C V Stanford

Music for our leaving *Praeludium und Fuga in A minor* BuxWV 153 Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707)

Serving

Minister - Margaret Garland

Organist and Choir Director - Karen Knudson

Readers - Linda Holloway

Alison Thornton

Peter Matheson

Prayer for others - Helen Thew

Welcoming team - Helen Thew's team

Counting team - Roy Somerville's team

Sound - Frengky Jigibalom

Marshal for the procession of the clans -

Roy Somerville

Piper - Scott Marshall

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.*

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