



# KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

## Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

10am – Sunday 8 November 2020

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Music to prepare us for worship “*Andante*” Jean Sibelius (1865-1957); “*I vow to thee my country*” Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

### Welcome

**Music of approach** “*O you who sleep*” text Moina Michael (1915), music K Knudson (2015)

### Call to worship

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

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

God has gathered us to this place,

**where we hear stories which show us what the realm of God is like.**

God summons us to this place,

**where we can learn how to serve our God, faithfully and passionately.**

God will send us from this place,

**to speak of God's hopes and dreams so people can choose to follow God.**

Let us worship God.

### Hymn

(tune Carlisle) CH4 202 - James Montgomery

1 Stand up and bless the Lord;  
all people now rejoice:  
stand up and bless the Lord your God  
with heart and soul and voice.

2 O for the living flame  
from his own altar brought,  
to touch our lips, our minds inspire,  
and wing to heaven our thought!

3 God is our strength and song,  
and his salvation ours;  
then be his love in Christ proclaimed  
with all our ransomed powers.

4 Stand up and bless the Lord,  
the Lord your God adore;  
stand up and bless his glorious name  
both now and evermore.

### 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.**

# Children

## Hymn

AA85 - Colin Gibson

(Refrain)

*Let justice roll down like a river,  
let justice roll down like a sea,  
let justice roll down like a river,  
let justice begin through me.*

1 Justice for all who go hungry,  
crying to God to be fed,  
left in a world of abundance  
to beg for a morsel of bread.  
(Refrain)

2 Justice for those who are homeless,  
victims of warfare or need,  
trapped on the borders of nowhere,  
lost in the canyons of greed.  
(Refrain)

3 Justice for all who are powerless,  
yearning for freedom in vain,  
plundered, and robbed of their  
birthright, silently bearing their pain.  
(Refrain)

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

### Amos 5:18-24

Alas for you who desire the day of the LORD! Why do you want the day of the LORD? It is darkness, not light; as if someone fled from a lion, and was met by a bear; or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall, and was bitten by a snake. Is not the day of the LORD darkness, not light, and gloom with no brightness in it? I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream.

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

### Matthew 25:1-13

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

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

## Music “Kyrie Eleison - Lord have mercy”

Gabriel Faure (1854-1924)

## Reflection “Get ready to wait”

When I chose the topic of this sermon I had not realised how relevant it was going to be to the Presidential election - with people waiting for the results! I imagine that as people involved in management heard the gospel this morning, they thought – where was their risk management plan! This parable is almost a proof text for such plans, or is it? The last words call us to keep awake, but given that both the wise and foolish bridesmaids fall asleep, perhaps this is a parable about being ready.

Let me begin with an analogy. The Mainland Cheese tv ad - two old men wearing braces and crumpled hats, sitting at a wooden table in front of an old stone building. They speak slowly because time goes slowly and cheese matures slowly. They wait and wait and wait. Every now and then, they taste the cheese but it is not yet ready. They wait a bit longer. Hidden away, beyond sight, the cheese is maturing. Their message - “Good things take time”. They are trusting a process that has been set in play but is hidden from them, and they are waiting for the time of maturity. In the meantime, in their reliance and trust of the process of maturing, they are ready. Good things take time. The wise ones in the parable were ready enough, trusting enough, to be able to sleep.

The foolish ones expect things to happen in their short timeline, according to their expectations, and they weren't ready to wait. I have seen that. An agency wanted to put up a building in a neighbouring country. Dozens of people came from a country like New Zealand, planned in advance, sent over the timber and tools in containers, spent weeks putting up the building and left. But they didn't realise how hungry the local termites were. They used timber that did not withstand termites. And they didn't realise the building needed to face in a particular direction in order not to be ransacked by local gangs. Within a couple of years, the building collapsed. By contrast, around the same time, another building was put up by people from the same country but who took time to listen to locals. As a result they used different material and a different style, and it still stands. One group waited long enough to listen to local people, so when the time came, they were ready.

Waiting is for anticipating and then getting ready for the right moment. That kind of waiting is especially needed when there are different cultures and different generations that need to be consulted and included, so that everyone becomes ready for the right time, with a spirit of joyful anticipation.

A congregation had not had children in worship for many years. The elders decided they wanted to include children. So they began to adapt their worship space. They looked at their approach to worship. They wondered about where children could participate and contribute. They prepared the congregation for movement and noise. It took four years from the time they made their initial decision before the first young families began to participate. But when they turned up, the congregation was ready. A congregation that was ready enough to wait.

Getting ready in a congregation requires sustaining the basic disciplines of spirit needed for moments of challenge and opportunity. In the 1980s I was visited by a previous minister of the congregation I served. He had been there in the 1950s and early 1960s. He told me what it was like – the church was going like a train. Youth Groups and Sunday Schools with hundreds of people. Full churches. And so on. And then he said, poignantly, we didn't take the opportunity to get ready for what we sensed was coming. When the culture changed, we hadn't maintained the

practices that enabled us to change with it. And he said, wistfully, why would we disturb what people evidently liked, by getting ready for something about which we were not sure? Being ready.

In the parable, the wise ones were prepared for the bridegroom's absence. These five did what was necessary while the bridegroom remained away, symbolised by their surplus lamp oil. The others, the foolish ones, are exposed when they find their lamps empty at the big moment. They didn't equip themselves to wait so they weren't ready to share the party with the bridegroom when he turned up.

Faithful readiness is active readiness. Even though the wedding banquet hasn't yet begun, together we need to act as if it has. To live otherwise is to be exposed as unaware, unattuned, inattentive, unready, perhaps revealing our disconnection from the bridegroom, from Jesus himself.

Most of the action in the parable takes place outside the door to the wedding banquet, in a world that waits. That's where we stand today, where sometimes we are overcome by sleepiness, where sometimes hope tires, where sometimes it feels pointless to get ready because we imagine nothing will change.

Faithful readiness expresses itself actively.

Our role as churches is to help ready our nation for the day there will be equal wealth, for the day there will be no racism, for the day no child will be poor, for the day imprisonment will be about safety, for the day people will be treated with respect.

Last year in Minneapolis, for a week I heard preachers from across the United States with a strong justice emphasis. They anticipated what we are seeing in USA: the barriers people face in registering to vote and then in voting. In that whole week, the President's name was used only once, because people realised they needed to attend to the deeper dynamics, especially of racism and injustice.

Martin Luther King – “When evil folk plot, good folk must plan.”

Parker Palmer speaks of those deeper places where God is at work to which we need to be attuned. “... the heart is where everything begins: that grounded place in each of us where we can overcome fear, rediscover that we are members of one another ...”

He speaks of acting with hope in the tragic gap. “On one side of that gap, we see the hard realities of the world, realities that can crush our spirits and defeat our hopes. On the other side of that gap, we see real-world possibilities, life as we know it could be because we have seen it that way ...”

“... we must judge ourselves by ... the standard called faithfulness. Are we faithful to the community on which we depend, to doing what we can in response to its pressing needs? Are we faithful to the better angels of our nature and to what they call forth from us? ... Are we faithful to the call of courage that summons us to witness to the common good, even against great odds?”

When faithfulness is our standard, we are more likely to sustain our engagement with tasks that will never end: doing justice, loving mercy, and calling the beloved community into being.”

Last Thursday the 5th of November we commemorated the events of Parihaka on the 5th of November in 1881. The day began with a service on Rongo rock near Anderson's Bay and it ended with a film here showing the children of Parihaka travelling the country to learn the story of Parihaka, including the story of the Parihaka prisoners here in Ōtepoti. What is this about?

About getting ready for the day the full story of our nation is known and owned, when wrongs are righted and justice is done.

Getting ready for the day our church acts maturely, with evident joy and generous love and faithful hope.

We're outside the door to the wedding banquet, where we need the disciplines of spirit that prepare us to wait, that ready us for when God turns up, that sustain us with the joy of anticipation.

## Hymn

CH4 528 - Sebastian Temple

1 Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there is hatred let me bring your love;  
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;  
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.

*O Master, grant that I may never seek  
so much to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

2 Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope;  
where there is darkness, only light;  
and where there's sadness, ever joy.

3 Make me a channel of your peace.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
in giving of ourselves that we receive,  
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

## 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** “*Ave verum*” Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Alex McAdam/tenor solo

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**

## **Hymn**

(tune Eventide CH4 393) HW 2355 - Timothy Dudley Smith

1 Whose is the voice which makes the winds blow?

He formed the hills and treads the mountains height;  
the clouds are his, the treasures of the snow;  
his word commands the darkness and the light.

2 The Pleiades are scattered from his hand,  
Orion's Belt, and all the starry sky;  
the tides of ocean and the sunlit land  
unite in witness to the Lord Most High.

3 Let justice roll, a never failing stream,  
till all the peoples of the earth be fed:  
one human family, that ancient dream,  
who share the hope, one peace, one daily bread.

4 Restore the fortunes of our wayward earth;  
make of us servants worthy of your call.  
Bring, in your Name, a better world to birth  
where Christ the Righteous is the Lord of all.

**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 “*Pie jesu*” Andrew Lloyd Webber (1990)

Grace Togneri and Jesse Hanan

*Symphony pathétique* - final movement, Tchaikovsky (1840-93)

Today's music is in remembrance

## **Serving**

Minister – Kerry Enright

Associate Minister - Jordan Redding

Organist and Choir Director – Karen Knudson

Reader – Barry Brown

Prayer for others – Warren Jowett

Welcoming team – David Richardson's team

Counting team – Howard Smith'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*
- *Give at the conclusion of the service.*

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