



KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

First Sunday of Advent

10am – Sunday 29 November 2020

Music to prepare us for worship "*Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen*" Johannes Brahms (1833-97) Op122
Fantasia on "Veni Emmanuel" Heathcote Statham (1956)

Welcome

Music of approach "*Personet Hodie*"

German Carol, arr. Gustav Holst (1874-1934)
text from Piaae Cantiones 1582

Call to worship

Rip open the sky, make planes divert their flight paths, tell the mountains to duck, and rush into this sanctuary. **Come Lord Jesus, come!**

Come and silence the violence, stop stray bullets that kill the innocent, expose dealers who peddle addiction, make your enemies know you and tremble in your presence. **Come Lord Jesus, come!**

We may fail to notice your presence, in everyday living, in casual conversations, or in blessings disguised as "coincidences." Still we cry ...

Come Lord Jesus, come!

Hymn

(tune Faithfulness) CH4 153 - Thomas O Chisholm

1 Great is thy faithfulness, O God my
Father,
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions
they fail not,
as thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy
faithfulness!*

*Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath
provided –
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*

2 Summer and winter, and seed-time
and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses
above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and
love. [*Refrain*]

3 Pardon for sin and a peace that
endureth,
thy own dear presence to cheer and to
guide;
strength for today and bright hope for
tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand
beside. [*Refrain*]

Children

Lighting the candle of hope

We light this candle as a sign of the coming light of Christ. As God has promised, in days to come ... the nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Sung response

(tune: He came down) CH4 359 – from Cameroon, John L Bell

He came down that we may have hope;
he came down that we may have hope;
he came down that we may have hope,
hallelujah for 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.**

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

Isaiah 64:1-9

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence – as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil – to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind – just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you – so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

Mark 13:24-37

"But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake--for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

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

Music *"The Angel Gabriel"* text S Baring-Gould, Basque Carol arr David Willcocks (1919-2015)

Reflection 'The Revealing'

The church has strange practices. For example, our calendar is peculiar. The church's new year begins today, four Sundays before Christmas, not on the first of January. And we begin the year with a set of readings that are not about the birth of Jesus, which is where you might think the story would begin, but about the fulfilment of the life of Jesus. In other words, we begin at the end. And in so doing, as we move towards celebrating the birth of Jesus, we are invited to expand our horizons, to extend Christ's inhabitation of time, to see his life as it is stretched into the future, to the goal of it all, which is where we are taken today.

What difference does that make? We were driving north to Whakatane in the north island. We had passed Taupo and I said to the family – "We're going to take the short-cut I have heard about through the Kaingaroa Forest." So when we were near Reporoa, we turned right and headed onto the forest roads. We turned here and there and after a while one of the children said – Dad, you know those hills that were on the left when we started. Well, they seem now to be on the right. Are we still heading north? At which point another car appeared, the first for a long time. We waved them down. Can you tell us the way to Whakatane from here, and they pointed back in the direction from which we had come. We repented. We turned around. Without Whakatane, we would still be driving the gravel roads of the Kaingaroa Forest. The destination makes all the difference to what we do now and it enables us to sense the times we need to turn around. The destination is the judgement, the criteria of the worth of what we do. The church begins the new year focused on the destination.

And what is it? Paul writes of it. The church in Corinth was a church divided with competing leaders and conflicting understandings. The divisions were deep but it was also a church with many gifts. The people had become consumed by the variety of their short visions and had taken their eyes off the uniting goal of it all. Paul begins his letter by affirming their gifts and especially the giver of those gifts, captured in the word "grace". Grace is God's overflowing love, God's irrepressible generosity, God's eternal blessing of creation. Paul gives thanks for that grace because by it the Corinthians have been enriched in Christ in speech and knowledge of every kind so that they were not lacking in any spiritual gift. What a remarkable thing to say of a church with deep divisions – they were not lacking in any spiritual gift.

But what are those gifts for? "As you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ ..." The purpose of these gifts, the purpose of their life together, is the revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ. What does that mean? For followers of Jesus, the revealing of Christ, is the revealing of human being as it is meant to be.

Christ is the human in the fullest and richest and most life-giving way. Human identity, human being, human purpose is revealed in the revealing of Christ. And not just personally, because in the coming of the Holy Spirit, Christ became community, a body in the fullest sense of that word. So the revealing of Christ, involves the revealing of a living, breathing, active body of Christ, the revealing of a community that embodies how Christ relates with creation, including humankind. And more than that, the revealing of the fullness of God among us.

The end of the story is the revealing of Jesus Christ, the revealing of full humanity, the revealing of life-giving community, the revealing of the One who is with all. A purpose with the broadest of horizons. This is important when we come to ordain new elders. The Book of Order refers to church councils and ministers guiding and governing the congregation. The destination of their guiding and governing is the revealing of Jesus Christ, in the world and for the sake of the world. So when we come to set goals or make a decision or take a step as a congregation, the question for the church council and for every part of the congregation, is it taking us towards the full revelation of Jesus Christ?

It is a vision meant for the world. It is not a revealing for the church but for and in the world. As our lives develop a pattern, as our cities and towns and communities develop a pattern, as creation develops a pattern, where do we see emerging the pattern of Jesus Christ, the image of Jesus Christ, the revealing of Jesus Christ? It is that for which we look.

In the meantime we wait in anticipation, with a thirst, a longing, a passion, a persistent crying ...

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down so that the mountains would quake at your presence ...

O that you would make your name known to your adversaries ...

O that you would greet those who joyfully do what is right

O that you would reshape us as a potter shapes the clay.

O that you would send out your angels and gather your people

O that you would come in evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or at dawn

We long for that revealing as a lover longs for their beloved.

We long for that revealing as you take hold of our hearts and spirits and bodies.

For your revealing O Christ, the one who is most fully human, the one who is community at its most loving, the one who is life-giving spirit flowing through all.

Hymn

(7676D) GtG 357 – David Gambrell 2009

1 The days are surely coming, says God
to all the earth,
when you will see my promise:
salvation come to birth.

My righteousness and justice will
spread throughout the land
and you will be delivered by my
almighty hand.

2 The days are surely coming, says
Christ, the promised one,
when you will read my warning, in
moon and stars and sun.

Though earth and heaven tremble,
stand up and do not fear,

for I am your redeemer, and I am
drawing near.

3 The days are surely coming, when we
will know at last
the fullness of God's presence, God's
promise, come to pass.

Then righteousness and justice will
spread throughout the land
and we will be delivered by God's
almighty hand.

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.

Alisha Jefferis, Jamie Marra, Patsy Mason and Jody Takimoana were elected to be elders on the church council at our Annual Meeting. The Church Council has decided that they are ready to be ordained and inducted as elders.

When asked, the congregation is invited to respond as below:

Renewal of Commitment

To all: Putting your whole trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, do you seek to serve Christ in the world, living towards the coming realm of God? **We do.**

To the congregation: As members of this congregation, will you encourage and support your elders and remember them in your prayers? **We will.**

...

Prayer

God of grace, you have called us to be disciples of Christ and to share in his ministry of reconciliation. Renew our commitment to Christ. Deepen our joy in your service. Hearten us to live your love for the world and to seek God in our neighbour, through Jesus Christ. Amen. ...

The Advent Calendar and Advent Prayer

The offertory prayer

Hymn

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

2 O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
in ancient times didst give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe:
[Refrain]

(tune: Veni Emmanuel) CH4 273 - John Mason Neale

3 O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave:
[Refrain]

4 O come, thou Dayspring, come and
cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight:
[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 *"Toccata on Veni Emmanuel"*

Andrew Carter (b. 1939)

Serving

Minister - Kerry Enright
Associate Minister - Jordan Redding
Organist and Choir Director - Karen Knudson
Reader - Judy Breward
Prayer for others - Sara Brown
Welcoming team - Helen Thew's team
Counting team - Roy Somerville's team
Sound - Moira Thomson

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.*