



KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

10am – Sunday 24 January 2021 The Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Music to prepare us for worship “*The old castle*” Modest Mussorgsky (1839–81), “*Folk song*” Percy Whitlock,
“*Wie schon leuchtet der Morgenstern*” (How brightly beams the morning star) by Andreas Armsdorff (1670-99)

Please place your offering in the offering boxes at the back of the church, if possible before worship commences.

Welcome

Call to worship

(based on Psalm 62 and Mark 1)

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

Ma Ihowa koe e manaaki. May God bless you.

It is time to become focused, not on our wants or complaints but on God:

For God alone my soul waits in silence, for God alone is our rock and salvation.

Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, saying the time has come, the realm of God is at hand.

The realm of God is not very far from any one of us, for in God we live and move and have our being.

Jesus said: repent and believe in the good news.

The time has come. In the silent places of my soul I turn to God, for God alone is our rock and salvation.

Let us worship God.

Hymn

(tune: Melita) CH4 484 - Brian Wren

1 Great God, your love has called us here,
as we, by love, for love were made.
Your living likeness still we bear,
though marred, dishonoured,
disobeyed.

We come, with all our heart and mind
your call to hear, your love to find.

2 Great God, in Christ you call our name
and then receive us as your own,
not through some merit, right or claim,
but by your gracious love alone.
We strain to glimpse your mercy-seat
and find you kneeling at our feet.

3 Then take the towel, and break the bread,
and humble us, and call us friends.
Suffer and serve till all are fed,
and show how grandly love intends
to work till all creation sings,
to fill all worlds, to crown all things.

4 Great God, in Christ you set us free
your life to live, your joy to share.
Give us your Spirit's liberty
to turn from guilt and dull despair
and offer all that faith can do
while love is making all things new.

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

(tune: Seek ye first) CH4 641 - Karen Lafferty

1 Seek ye first the kingdom of God
and his righteousness;
and all these things shall be added unto
you;
allelu, alleluia.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

3 You shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word
that proceeds from the mouth of the
Lord;
allelu, alleluia.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

2 Ask, and it shall be given unto you,
seek, and ye shall find;
knock, and the door shall be opened
unto you;
allelu, alleluia.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

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

Psalm 62:5-12

For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. On God rests my deliverance and my honor; my mighty rock, my refuge is in God. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah. Those of low estate are but a breath, those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath. Put no confidence in extortion, and set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, do not set your heart on them. Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God, and steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord. For you repay to all according to their work.

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

Mark 1:14-20

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea--for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

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

Reflection "From along the shoreline"

The gospel of Mark chapter one, verse 15 - "Now is the time! Here comes God's kingdom! Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news!" A reflection in the first person ...

You may have noticed my hands. Wrinkly, brown, scratched, rough, They are certainly not smooth.

They've spent a lot of time in the water and in the sun. I am a fisherman and I spend my time casting a net. Or cleaning fish or mending nets or repairing boats or just waiting for the weather. Have you tried pulling a wet, heavy, awkward net into a boat without falling out, keeping your balance? I know I smell ... the fishy juice seeps into my pores. No matter how hard I wash. There are people who avoid me – I notice that. It's not easy work. But before I go too far, let me introduce myself. My name is Hezekiah and I am a fisherman.

I am speaking with you today, because years ago I saw Simon and Andrew leave their nets and follow the prophet. I had known them for a long time. We fished together. Our families were friends. It's not a big town and we try to help each other. In some ways I was not surprised at them walking away. There has to be more than this. Day after day, working hard, earning little. We're among the poorest in our land. The Romans make certain of that. They have claimed ownership of the lake, they tax us heavily, and they take a percentage of our earnings. Even when we work hard and catch many fish, we can end up making no money. No money means no food. But so far only the farmers have protested. They refused to harvest their crops because it was all going to the Romans, and eventually they marched on Jerusalem. So when the prophet came, and offered a different way, I was not surprised. I can see that for Simon and Andrew, now was the time. Enough was enough. It had gone on too long. It is time to live into something new. But how do we bring change when the powers seem overwhelming, when Roman rule will last forever, where we are so insignificant, so puny? As I watched them leave, I wondered how the prophet would lead. He didn't go to Rome as Moses went to Pharaoh demanding "let my people go!". Rome and Caesar were irrelevant to the prophet. And although he was popular he didn't seem interested in forming a political movement. He didn't seize the moment, and use people to promote himself although he had the opportunity. Nor, it seemed, was he that interested in organised religion. He didn't become a religious leader, a chief rabbi or a patriarch.

And he didn't follow the paths others took. We have prophets in our land, people who lead movements, but this prophet didn't seem to fit any of them. He was no freedom fighter, for example. In our history we have often fought back. Zealots have used guerrilla warfare to counter overwhelming power. People were ready to die for our country and its liberation. Yet none of the movements brought liberation, except for the Maccabees for four years. The prophet was more than a freedom fighter.

There are others who think the best response to occupation is religious as it is God's judgement because the people have forgotten God's law. The empire is nothing but heathenism and heathenism can be pushed back only if people live by the law of God, if they live morally upright lives. Only such faith will overthrow the Roman heathens. But the prophet is not a Pharisee. Nor is he a Sadducee, people who think the best way is to accommodate to oppressive power. Sadducees have a religious function, a group that is small but influential, well connected and aristocratic. They understand the dynamics both of the street and those in power. Their slogan is "We don't like the empire, but as long as it is here, we have to deal with it." They walk the tightrope involved in the question – Is this God's or is this the emperor's?

They had to please the people and those in power, standing in the middle, mediating, negotiating, seeking accommodation. The prophet was more than a Sadducee.

Others more actively collaborated. If you cannot beat them, join them. Opportunists, who seek to benefit from the empire by doing business with it. Tax collectors who collected from the people and kept some for themselves. No empire lasts without such collaborators. The prophet was no collaborator. Others did the opposite of collaborate – they withdrew. They were disillusioned and disappointed with their religious leadership who compromised too much with the empire. They were frightened of the invading culture of the empire that was changing the behaviour of the people. To them the world was lost, corrupt and evil. The only possible response was to retreat from the world into the desert, into small communities to create an alternative social structure. This structure would enable people to uphold the old rules and the pure teachings of the law in anticipation of the final battle against the evil empire. But the prophet did not belong to the community of Qumran.

So Andrew and Simon set out on a journey unlike any other. Not fighting back, not observing the law, not accommodating, not collaborating, not retreating, not focusing on Rome, not forming a political movement, not being religious leaders. I saw in them a different way. A way I saw in how they travelled and in the company they kept. They went from one town to another, from village to village, especially to the remote villages whose names were barely known. They went to people who weren't religious leaders or politicians, who weren't intellectuals or part of the elite. They went to people who were on the margins, people like Andrew and Simon, people like me. People possessed by demons. People not in control of their lives. People who feared for life. People who could not stand upright. People who were cast out. People who had almost no education, who had not received any attention, who had few if any opportunities.

So Andrew and Simon remained Andrew and Simon, rough hands, rough words, rough behaving, but inspired, caught up. But I saw them caught up in a way that reached out to others just like us. It became their driving ambition. Their vision was much more than Rome, more than Caesar, more than the empire, more than the Temple, more than the restoring of Israel. They held to a God with a grand vision, a future on a vast scale, more than we had imagined. To a world that ceased to be hostile for anyone, a world that would be a home for all. The reign of God on earth. I saw in Andrew and Simon that it was whole of life, not a bit of religion and a bit of politics and a bit of spirituality – more than any of that, whole of life. They imagined a different world, so different it blew my mind. And when I met them, it was as if they had a new heart, a new mind, a new spirit. As if God was near, a presence, a power close at hand. They began to live as if the new world was just around the corner, very close. And not just them. They were part of a group of people wrapping their minds around this new way of being. Growing together, learning together, encouraging together, journeying together, following together.

So what of me? I see in Simon and Andrew a hope, a spirit that is tugging at me. I don't understand it much. I am afraid of what it might mean for my relationships and my work and my way of life. Can I risk these? But then enough is enough, and if not now, when? I look beyond the shoreline to the sea so familiar to me. As a fisherman, despite the risks, nearly every day I trust myself to that watery realm. I wonder if I can trust myself to the prophet's way, to be with him, and all the others with hands as rough as mine.

Hymn

(tune: 7676D Aurelia) GtG 170 - Sylvia Dunstan

1 You walk along our shoreline
where land meets unknown sea.
We hear your voice of power,
“Now come and follow me.
And if you still will follow
through storm and wave and shoal,
then I will make you fishers
but of the human soul.”

2 You call us, Christ, to gather
The people of the earth.
We cannot fish for only
those lives we think have worth.
We spread your net of gospel
across the water's face,
our boat a common shelter
for all found by your grace.

3 We cast our net, O Jesus;
we cry the kingdom's name;
we work for love and justice;
we learn to hope through pain.
You call us, Lord, to gather
God's daughters and God's sons,
to let your judgment heal us
so that all may be one.

Offertory Prayer

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 kaweā kia
whakawaia;
Engari whakaorangia mātou i te kino:
Nōu hoki te rangatiratanga, te kaha,
me te korōria, Āke āke āke. Āmine.**

Hymn

1 Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult
of our life's wild, restless sea,
day by day his voice is sounding,
saying, 'Christian, follow me'.

2 As, of old, Saint Andrew heard it
by the Galilean lake,
turned from home and toil and
kindred,
leaving all for his dear sake.

(tune: St Andrew) CH4 509 - Cecil Frances Alexander (alt.)

3 Jesus calls us from the worship
of the vain world's golden store,
from each idol that would keep us,
saying, 'Christian, love me more'.

4 Jesus calls us! By your mercy,
Saviour, make us hear your call,
give our hearts to your obedience,
serve and love you best of all.

Benediction

Music for our leaving *Concerto in A minor* (BWV 593) by Antonio Vivaldi, arr. J S Bach (1685-1750)

Serving today

Minister - Kerry Enright (0274675542)

Associate Minister - Jordan Redding

Organist and Choir Director - Karen Knudson

Reader - Janet Sim Elder

Prayer for others - Liz Miller

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*
- *Give online to the Church's bank account at 03 0903 0016425 00 - our charity number for tax rebate purposes is #CC52318*
- *Give before the service, into the offering boxes at the back of the church*