



KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

10am – Sunday 14 January 2021

Transfiguration Sunday

Music to prepare us for worship From “*Concerto in D minor*” Antonio Vivaldi, arr J S Bach (1685-1750)
played by Grace Togneri, Knox organ Scholar

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

Music of approach “*The Ground*” music by Ola Gjelio

John Elder/ piano

Call to worship

(from Psalm 50)

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

Ma Ihowa koe e manaaki. May God bless you.

The mighty One speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

Out of Zion, God shines forth.

Our God will come and not keep silent.

God calls the heavens and the earth to witness the gathering of the people.

Gathered into God’s presence, let us worship God.

Hymn

(tune: Gather us in) CH4 623 - Marty Haugen

1 Here in this place, new light is
streaming,
now is the darkness vanished away,
see in this space our fears and our
dreamings,
brought here to you in the light of this
day.
Gather us in – the lost and forsaken,
gather us in – the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken,
we shall arise at the sound of our name.

2 We are the young – our lives are a
mystery,
we are the old who yearn for your face,
we have been sung throughout all of
history,
called to be light to the whole human
race.

Gather us in – the rich and the haughty,
gather us in – the proud and the strong;
give us a heart so meek and so lowly,
give us the courage to enter the song.

3 Here we will take the wine and the
water,
here we will take the bread of new
birth,
here you shall call your sons and your
daughters,
call us anew to be salt for the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion,
give us to eat the bread that is you;
nourish us well, and teach us to fashion,
lives that are holy and hearts that are
true.

4 Not in the dark of buildings confining,
not in some heaven, light years away,
but here in this place, the new light is
shining,
now is the Kingdom, now is the day.

Gather us in and hold us forever,
gather us in and make us your own;
gather us in – all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

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.**

Music “*I was Glad*” (Psalm 122) music by C H Parry Soloists: Sarah Hubbard, Claire Barton, Jesse Hanan, Rhys Thorn, Jack Hanan, John Elder. Sara Brown/ conductor, Karen Knudson/ organ

Children

Hymn

1 Lord, the light of your love is shining
in the midst of the darkness, shining;
Jesus, light of the world, shine upon us,
set us free by the truth you now bring
us.

Shine on me, shine on me:

Shine, Jesus, shine,

fill this land with the Father's glory;

blaze, Spirit, blaze,

set our hearts on fire.

Flow, river, flow,

flood the nations with grace and mercy;

send forth your word,

Lord, and let there be light!

(tune: Shine Jesus Shine) CH4 448 - Graham A Kendrick

2 Lord, I come to your awesome
presence,
from the shadows into your radiance;
by the blood I may enter your
brightness,
search me, try me, consume all my
darkness.

Shine on me, shine on me.

[Refrain]

3 As we gaze on your kingly brightness,
so our faces display your likeness,
ever changing from glory to glory,
mirrored here may our lives tell your
story.

Shine on me, shine on me.

[Refrain]

Readings

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

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

Mark 9:2-9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

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

Reflection "The wild mountain God"

Kerry was greatly helped by an online commentary on the Mark reading by Ched Myers at ["God is Like a Mountain" \(Mk 9:2-9\) – Radical Discipleship](#).

When the Bible mentions mountains, we need to prick up our ears. Something important is about to happen. And when we hear about mountains in the New Testament, we need to remember what happened on mountains in the Hebrew scriptures. Two times in particular the Bible speaks of Moses and mountains. The first time, Israel camps at the foot of the mountain, where God calls to Moses to prepare the people for an encounter (Ex 19:3). Israel has "seen" what God did to free them from imperial Egypt (v. 4); now they must "hear" God's voice (v. 5f). God "comes down" from the mountain to give Israel instructions on how to live in community, without giving in to the oppressive empire (v. 11). In the meantime there is drama up the mountain - thunder and lightning, smoke and fire, a great cloud (Ex 19:16-19). The second time, Moses goes up the mountain to receive the ten commandments on stone tablets. Many features of that story appeared in Mark's story.

Ex 24:15-18: Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day God called to Moses out of the cloud. The appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. So what did we hear today that was in that story? Six days; Jesus led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves; There appeared to them Elijah with Moses; A cloud overshadowed them; From the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!".

In many cultures mountains are places of divine disclosure, so in our story today, a place of revelation. Evan Eisenberg wrote a book called *The Ecology of Eden*. He highlights the ecological significance of mountains in the Bible. He notes that the land of these mountains, the land of Canaan, also contains the lowest dry land on the planet. There is the shore of the Dead Sea, and there are deserts and coastal plains. We are asked to notice the contrast between the lowest land and the imposing mountains, the contrast between the deathliness of that dry land and the life-giving experiences on the mountain. If we were there, we would see it and sense it, the height and depth and length and breadth of God's concern for creation.

Eisenberg notes how certain places play a central role in the flow of energy and the cycling of water and nutrients, and in the maintaining and spread of genetic diversity. Such places provide the means by which ecosystems around them are healthy for humans and other life forms. They help control flooding and soil erosion. They provide fresh infusions of pollinating birds and insects. They regulate the mix of oxygen and carbon dioxide and water vapour and they keep its temperature within bounds. They are means by which life-giving wildness brings life to places that have

been shut down, hardened by human abuse. All such places are more or less wild; many are forested and from them great rivers flow. So in Canaan, as elsewhere, mountains are essential to the health of the land and thereby the health of the people. They are the cradle of life.

In the story today, here is God, in the cradle of life, pointing to Jesus, and as we stand there between the dead sea and the mountain ranges, we are to make connections, ecological connections. Here are spiritual leaders going up a mountain to experience the origin of life in order that they can bless creation and its people. Here are prophets receiving instructions on how people need to live amid the hardness of imperial domination. Here are visionaries communing with the wild God, on sacred peaks far from empire and the damage it has done to the earth and its people. And there in the middle of all this, there is Jesus transfigured, in the presence of the wild mountain God. Now there are two paths to walk from this point in the story. The path of Moses. On that path, the mountaintop experiences of Moses and Jesus cause them to “glow”. The glow symbolises a profound connection to the Source of life. When Moses went up the mountain for 40 days, he came down with his face “aglow” (Ex 34:30, 34f). The image is of one who experiences God on the mountain, so the mountain is understood as life-giving and healing and restoring. Perhaps we have had that experience, times we have been with God in nature in a way that we have felt renewed or cleansed or reoriented or freshly grounded. We have experienced the unshackled biosphere with an energy different to what we experience in busy urban lives. The poets and prophets of our faith continually point to the wilderness as a space of spiritual renewal.

There is another path, the path of Daniel, with the image of the Son of Man used in Daniel and used in Mark. Daniel saw one who was like a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. Daniel has a vision of a Divine Judge who supports the oppressed. On this path the mountain is a place free of the damaging power of empire. Empire is a code word for what stops creation from flourishing and stops humankind from living abundantly. On this path, we meet a wild god who challenges imperial powers, who cannot be tamed.

It is a common temptation to try to make god an instrument of our own desires. The Mesopotamians tried to tame the wild God. In their cities they tried to reproduce the mysterious mountains “where the gods dwelled”. At the heart of every Mesopotamian city was a sacred precinct, and at the heart of every sacred precinct was a ziggurat, a stepped pyramid of mud brick. The Mesopotamians located their gods on these mini-mountains. And the people who communed at those mini-mountains were the rulers, So mini-mountains had mini-gods, used by rulers to support their oppression of the people. The gods became the patrons of empire. So we have the story of the tower of Babel (Gen 11) which is a parody of domination.

By contrast, in our tradition, God is a wild God who is encountered in the mystery of the mountain, who resists being enlisted for oppression and domination, a wild God who challenges the powers that dominate, a wild God who cradles creation, a wild God with whom people flourish. The heroes of our faith, Moses, Elijah, Jesus stand with the untameable, anti-imperial God on a shrouded hill to challenge all our efforts to control or use God. There is Moses, liberated from Pharaoh’s Egypt and embraced by God on Sinai. There is Elijah who fled from the royal threats to gain strength to continue God’s freedom struggle. There is Jesus at the misty Source of all life, being given strength for the difficult journey to Jerusalem to face the Powers.

The experience of transcendence on a mountain, the cradle of life. The revealing of a wild God we know in mystery, in a cloud. The fuelling of people to struggle for justice in hard places. The Mountain of God as a spiritual fount. The mountain of God as a challenge to the ways empires try to hold on to power. The sacred mountain, the cradle of life, where the wild God is, the one who empowers us for healing creation and resisting evil. No mini-mountain. No mini-God.

Hymn

(tune: Hyfrydol [CH4 39]) - Carl P Daw, jr

1 We have come at Christ’s own bidding
to this high and holy place,
where we wait with hope and longing
for some token of God’s grace.
Here we pray for new assurance
that our faith is not in vain,
searching like those first disciples
for a sign both clear and plain.

3 Strengthened by this glimpse of glory,
fearful lest our faith decline,
we, like Peter, find it tempting
to remain and build a shrine.
But true worship gives us courage
to proclaim what we profess,
that our daily lives may prove us
people of the God we bless.

2 Light breaks through our clouds and shadows,
splendour bathes the flesh joined Word,
Moses and Elijah marvel
as the heavenly voice is heard.
Eyes and hearts behold with wonder
how the Law and Prophets meet:
Christ with garments drenched in brightness,
stands transfigured and complete.

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 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 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 your name. Hosanna in the
highest. ...**

Distribution "*O Nata Lux- O light born of light*"

Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)

Hymn

1 Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

*Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts;
shine through the darkness.*

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

(tune: Christ be our light) CH4 543 - Bernadette Farrell

2 Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed. [*Refrain*]

3 Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
helping your kingdom come. [*Refrain*]

Benediction

Music for our leaving "*The Power of Life*" Mons Leidvin Takle

played by Grace Togneri

Serving today

Minister - Kerry Enright (0274675542)

Associate Minister - Jordan Redding

Organist and Choir Director - Karen Knudson

Reader - Peter Matheson

Prayer for others - Mavis Duncanson

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*