



KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

10am – Sunday 28 February 2021

The Second Sunday in Lent

Music to prepare us for worship

played by Richard Brown and John Elder

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

Welcome

Music of approach *“The heavens declare the Creator's glory- Creation Hymn*

Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Call to worship

from Psalm 22: 23-27

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

Ma Ihowa koe e manaaki. May God bless you.

I will declare your name to my people;

in the midst of the assembly I will praise you.

Give praise to God, proclaim God's greatness.

For God does not turn away from people in their poverty.

God's face is not hidden from them.

When they cry out, God hears them.

Let all the ends of the earth remember -

Let all the families of the nations bow down.

Let us worship God.

Hymn

(tune: Lewis Folk Melody) CH4 510 - G Maule & JL Bell

1 Jesus calls us here to meet him
as, through word and song and prayer,
we affirm God's promised presence
where his people live and care.
Praise the God who keeps his promise;
praise the Son who calls us friends;
praise the Spirit who, among us,
to our hopes and fears attends.

2 Jesus calls us to confess him
Word of life and Lord of all,
sharer of our flesh and frailness,
saving all who fail or fall.
Tell his holy human story;
tell his tales that all may hear;
tell the world that Christ in glory
came to earth to meet us here.

3 Jesus calls us to each other,
vastly different though we are;
creed and colour, class and gender
neither limit nor debar.
Join the hand of friend and stranger;
join the hands of age and youth;
join the faithful and the doubter
in their common search for truth.

Prayer of praise and confession

Before and at the conclusion of the prayer, the following refrain will be sung:

E te ariki, kia aroha mai

E te karaiti, kia aroha mai

E te ariki, kia aroha mai, kia aroha mai

O Lord, have mercy, have mercy on us

O Christ, have mercy, have mercy on us

O Lord, have mercy, have mercy on us, have mercy on us.

Assurance of forgiveness and passing of the peace

E te whanau a te Karaiti, brothers and sisters 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

Music *“Helig Heilig- Holy Holy”*

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Readings

Psalm 22:23-31

You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; he did not hide his face from me, but heard when I cried to him. From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him. The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD. May your hearts live forever! All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him. For dominion belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him. Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.

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

Mark 8:31-38

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

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

Reflection "No handle on the Cross"

We see crosses in all kinds of places, as earrings and necklaces, on hot cross buns, on memorials, on Anzac plaques, on headstones, atop some buildings, and of course in churches. In churches in various ways – on Ash Wednesday, we put a cross on our foreheads with the words "you are dust and to dust you shall return". On Palm Sunday we will all be given flax crosses to take away. The cross was never meant to be tidy.

Tom Long recounts an article in the Wall Street Journal about a California congregation that went to the local zoning commission with plans for a new church building, only to find in the meeting dozens of their neighbours protesting against the church's plans. One of them said, "A new church building will just generate traffic and noise." Another said, "I don't want to get up in the morning and look out of my window and see a church. I want to see the mountains, not a cross." So they reached a compromise. The congregation redesigned their church so that it looked like a split-level house, like all the other houses on the street. And they placed a tiny cross discreetly over the doorway so that no one would ever be bothered by the church.

I want to see the mountains, not a cross. That local community was on to something. They might have sensed that the cross is a bother, a big bother. And it is as much a bother for the Church as for the community. And if the cross is a bother, then the church of the cross will also be a bother. The title of this sermon is taken from a book written by a Japanese theologian Kosuke Koyama who in the 1970s taught in the Religious Studies Department across the road at the University. He went on to a distinguished career at Union Seminary in New York. Koyama contrasted the inconvenience of the cross with the convenience of a Japanese businessman's lunch box. The lunch box was tidy, convenient, able to be put away and taken out easily. In contrast the cross has no handle. It is awkward and inconvenient and untidy and bothersome. There is no handle on the cross.

Ched Myers: "The cross was not a religious icon in first century Palestine, nor was "taking up the cross" a metaphor for personal anguish. Crucifixion had only one connotation: the vicious form of capital punishment reserved by imperial Rome for political dissidents. Crosses were a common sight at the time Mark wrote, amidst the Jewish insurrection of 66-70 C.E. In contrast to Judean nationalists who were recruiting patriots to "take up the sword" against Rome, Mark's Jesus invited disciples to "take up the cross."

Taking up our cross is not a metaphor for personal anguish. It is not about bearing an illness or difficult relationship as if it is a cross we must bear. Jesus is speaking about the pain and difficulty that come as a result of following him. Many have suggested that the modern equivalent of the cross might be the electric chair. The cross was the way in which the Roman empire subjugated people. Crucifixion was the way the government of the time deterred people from defying the emperor. Crosses stood at intersections to remind people of the cost of defiance. If today's equivalent is the electric chair, there would be in the middle of the Octagon or on the corner of Pitt and George Streets, an electric chair.

Reminding us that this is what will happen to you if you disobey the Roman empire. Jesus was alerting his followers that the gospel he proclaimed represented a challenge to the empire, and the cost for him would be the electric chair. And he tells them, that might be the same cost for you.

There are famous words of George McLeod, founder of the Iona Community.

“I simply argue that the cross be raised again, at the centre of the marketplace as well as on the steeple of the church. I am recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles but on a cross between two thieves; on a town garbage heap; at a crossroad of politics so cosmopolitan that they had to write His title in Hebrew and in Latin and in Greek ... and at the kind of place where cynics talk smut, and thieves curse, and soldiers gamble. Because that is where He died, And that is what He died about. And that is where Christ’s own ought to be, And that is what church people ought to be about.” Jesus called the crowd with the disciples and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”

What does that mean when we in New Zealand will never be crucified or killed in an electric chair?

“Sometimes”, says Tom Long, “the commands of Jesus and the demands of life - a job, a social setting or a relationship - are in tension, if not outright conflict, and the workaday life of Christians is filled with a thousand moral dilemmas.” To take up our cross means to face the moral dilemmas with which we live. How do we cherish creation in our everyday living? How can our work be life-giving? How can we help change systems that privilege some and exclude others? How can we stand with those who are most marginalised as we go about our studies, our work, our lives? Bothersome stuff.

And not just bothersome stuff, stretching stuff. As Macleod said, the cross takes us outside the city wall, to where human experience is intense. Carrying our cross involves being with people in the intensity of their living. The intensity of dying and death. The intensity of grieving. The intensity of illness and struggle. The intensity of prejudice and exclusion. The intensity of poverty and injustice. The cross stands, someone said, in the hot white centre of the world’s pain. And we are not just to glance in the general direction of suffering and then sidle away, but to go there. To identify ourselves with those who are aching, weeping, screaming, and dying. To recognise Christ crucified in every suffering soul and body that surrounds us. Bothersome yes. Intense yes. But there is a promise here, and it is a promise that feeds courage. Carrying our cross means bearing the assurance that we are held in the utter, final, unflinching love of God, unflinching to the point of death. The cross we carry is a sign of absolute love, that God will never let us go. That promise feeds our courage to go to the most intense experiences of pain and grief, of poverty and injustice, to find there the crucified Christ. Bearing the cross means being marked with the love of Christ, the love of God tattooed on our hearts.

Taking up our cross then involves bother, intensity and love. Bother because we take up a cross that brings moral dilemmas in our daily living. So it involves ethics. Intensity because we take up a cross that involves us in life’s most difficult places. So it nourishes empathy. Love because we take up a cross that represents God’s commitment to be with us in all of life. So it nourishes courage.

Hymn

(tune: Stuttgart [CH4 397]) CH4 401 - Martyr Haugen

1 Tree of life and awesome mystery,
in your death we are reborn;
though you die in all of history,
still you rise with every morn.

2 Seed that dies to rise in glory,
may we see ourselves in you;
if we learn to live your story
we may die to rise anew.

3 We remember truth once spoken,
love passed on through act and word;
every person, lost and broken
wears the body of our Lord.

4 Christ, you lead and we shall follow,
stumbling though our steps may be;
one with you in joy and sorrow,
we the river, you the sea.

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.

Hymn

*Lift high the cross, the love of Christ
proclaim
till all the world adore God's glorious
name.*

1 Come, Christian people, sing your
praises, shout!
If we are silent, even stones cry out ...

Benediction

Music for our leaving *Improvisation on "Lift high the Cross"*

(tune: Crucifier) AA 87 - Shirley Murray

2 Jesus, you wept to see our human
strife,
teach us compassion for each human
life ...

3 Great is the cost of walking on this
road,
to follow and suffer with the Son of
God ...

Richard Brown

Serving today

Minister - Kerry Enright (0274675542)

Associate Minister - Jordan Redding

Organist and Choir Director - Karen Knudson

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*

Knox Church is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. Hymns in the service are reproduced with permission under License #604850, OneLicense – Copyright Cleared Music for Churches. Knox Church Dunedin is a registered charity #CC52318
Readings retrieved from <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/> [retrieved, 23 February 2021]