



# KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

## 10am – Sunday 21 March 2021

The Fifth Sunday in Lent  
Te Rātapu Tuarima o Rēneti

Music to prepare us for worship “*Andantino*” Felix Mendelssohn (1809-47), “*Wine of peace*” Charles Camilleri,  
“*Prelude*” & “*Fantasia*” BWV 558 & 571 J S Bach (1685-1750) Grace Togneri & Carolyn Schmid

*Everyone is welcomed to worship.*

## Welcome

**Music of approach** “*Nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen*” Traditional Spiritual, arr. Rowland Pack

## Call to worship

(based on Psalm 51)

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

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

God, you have placed your truth in the inner being;

**therefore, teach me the wisdom of the heart.**

Forgive all that binds me in fear that I might radiate love;

**cleanse me that your light might shine in me.**

Look not on my past mistakes

**but on the aspirations of my heart.**

Create in me a clean heart, O Gracious One;

**And put a new and right spirit within me.**

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

### Hymn

1 I, the Lord of sea and sky,  
I have heard my people cry.  
All who dwell in dark and sin  
my hand will save.

I, who made the stars of night,  
I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear my light to them?  
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord.*

*Is it I, Lord?*

*I have heard you calling in the night.*

*I will go, Lord,*

*if you lead me.*

*I will hold your people in my heart.*

(tune: Here I am, Lord) CH4 251 - Daniel L Schutte

2 I, the Lord of snow and rain,  
I have borne my people's pain.  
I have wept for love of them.

They turn away.

I will break their hearts of stone,  
give them hearts for love alone.

I will speak my Word to them.

Whom shall I send?

*[Refrain]*

3 I, the Lord of wind and flame,  
I will tend the poor and lame.

I will set a feast for them.

My hand will save.

Finest bread I will provide  
till their hearts be satisfied.

I will give my life to them.

Whom shall I send?

*[Refrain]*

## Readings

### Jeremiah 31:31-34

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt — a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

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

### Music

*"Agnus Dei- lamb of God"* from *Missa Kenya* - Basler

John McAdam/ horn, Rhys Thorn/ drums

### Hebrews 5:5-10

So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek." In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

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

### John 12:20-33

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say--' Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

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

## Reflection "Christ the Priest"

Many years ago I was reminded in a very challenging way of what it meant to be a representative in solidarity with people. Let me tell you the story. As with the government, so in the Presbyterian Church difficult issues are often given to commissions to decide what to do. So it was that I came to chair a commission that had to deal with a situation where a minister had called one of his elders a witch. What made the situation especially difficult was that the woman was Maori. So the minister was seen to be cursing not just the elder, but also her hapu and iwi, her people. Such is the sense of solidarity among

people. But there is also a strong tradition of solidarity in the Church. The minister was a minister of the Presbyterian Church and so was seen to be speaking on behalf of the whole Church. So the whole church speaking through one person to one person who represented her people. A number of actions followed. One of the actions took place in the meeting of the national body of the Church, the General Assembly. The elder and her people sat in the front of the Assembly and at the Assembly the Moderator of the Church, who is the spokesperson for the Church, expressed a deep apology for what the church had done to her and to her hapu and iwi and sought forgiveness. As you can imagine it was a very poignant moment and deeply emotional.

Representation and solidarity. A strong element of Maori culture. A strong element of the Church. One reason the present Royal Commission hearings are so important for the Church is because of what the church's representatives have done. So there are times we are reminded that as Christians, we do not act for ourselves alone. We are part of a body, representatives of a body, whether we are ministers or elders or deacons or members or associates of whatever.

When the Letter to the Hebrews talks about the priest Melchizedek, it's telling us something about the nature of representation and solidarity. Melchizedek wasn't a Christian, or a Jew. He just turns up from nowhere in Genesis chapter 14 bearing bread and wine and blesses Abraham. Being a priest is fundamentally about representing your people before God, and then secondarily about representing God before your people.

Israelite faith was nearly unique in the ancient world in its belief in one almighty God who was not only the creator of heaven and earth but also the saviour of a particular people. Through a particular people God sought to reconcile the whole world to Godself. Because Israel as a whole represented all the peoples of the earth before God, it was described in Exodus 19 as a "priestly kingdom" – that's to say, Israel was a collective priest. The Reformer Martin Luther spoke of the "priesthood of all believers" – not that every believer is a priest, but that together, believers corporately are a priestly mediator, just as Israel was a mediator between God and all people.

Israel had representative priests, from the family of Aaron, who offered sacrifice, burned incense, and in general mediated Israel to God and God to Israel. The early Christians regarded Jesus as the last of these priests, because his loving sacrifice had finally taken away sins once and for all, being a sacrifice of his sinless self, not of a flawed animal. The letter to the Hebrews portrays Jesus as the High Priest who stands before God on our behalf and stands before us on God's behalf. By using the term High Priest, Hebrews is saying Jesus stands in the tradition of Israel, mediating the presence of God. But by referring to Melchizedek, who was around before there even was an Israel, Hebrews is saying Jesus is a mediator not just for the Jews but for all humankind.

When in baptism we are united with Christ, so we are united with Christ in his priesthood. Christ keeps open and busy the two-way channel between God and God's people, into which we are invited. It isn't about ritual and vestments. It's about practising the presence of God and being a reconciling presence in the life of others. So as a body we are invited to grow in the practice of the presence of God. All of us can become people who develop the awe and tenderness and humility and wonder and gentleness that come from knowing that God is at work in us and in others in the same way God was at work in the life of Jesus Christ. And all of us can be a reconciling presence in the life of those around us. So we are part of a body in which is lived out reconciliation with God and reconciliation with one another.

The passage from Hebrews highlights aspects of the priesthood of Christ. We're told that Jesus didn't put himself forward, but was appointed. We do not apply to be part of the priesthood of Christ. As we live out our baptism, we live out the priesthood of Christ. It isn't about trying harder or working to achieve a certain degree of faith or devotion or holiness. God appoints. This is our identity. It is about recognising that we are people who are one with the world, in solidarity with others, equal with others, and in solidarity with the world we bring that world before God, and we are called to be part of God's care for the world. In Christ, we are part of the constant flow there is between God and the world.

One way of living that priesthood is to pray for people we know or encounter, at work or at home or in our neighbourhood or wherever. I know someone who during a meeting in which they do not have to pay close attention will have a book and write down names, names of people in the congregation, names of

people in the community, family names, people for whom they pray a blessing. I know parents who pray for their children every day, and they have been doing it for decades. Living out the priesthood of Christ. Sam Wells says that the concept of priesthood is also how we can understand our relationship with creation. He suggests that the oft-used concept of us as stewards of creation is inadequate because it uses the language of property. He says, "Human beings are poised precisely in the role of mediator between God and creation: they are fully created, but, because Christ has taken human form, they are fully encompassed by God. Every time you step outside and gaze in wonder at the myriad of stars, you are being a priest, bringing to God the praise of creation. And every time you labour in the garden or care for an animal or lobby for sustainable energy you are being a priest, bringing God's care for creation into human form. Offering creation to God and showing God's care for creation is what priests do."

Hebrews also highlights how Jesus' priesthood was shaped out of his suffering. Jesus "offered up prayers...with loud cries and tears." Jesus brought to God his fears and struggles, his desperation. To share in that priesthood is to offer to God our tears and suffering and struggles and doubts. And not just ours, but the tears and suffering and struggles and doubts of the world. In that action we're the church interceding for the world. You can bring every aspect of your work or family or neighbourhood, be it good, bad or ugly, to God and pray for transformation.

Christ is one with us and one with God and so in solidarity with creation, enables the constant flow between God and creation, and we are invited to be part of that.

*Some thoughts in this sermon are drawn from a sermon preached by Sam Wells at Duke University Chapel - March 29  
Priests Forever (duke.edu)*

## Hymn

(tune: Wiltshire) TiS 248 - Brian Wren

1 Dear Christ, uplifted from the earth,  
your arms stretched out above  
through every culture, every birth,  
to draw an answering love.

2 Still east and west your love extends  
and always, near and far,  
you call and claim us as your friends  
and love us as we are.

3 Where age and gender, class and  
race,  
divides us to our shame,  
you see a person and a face,  
a neighbour with a name.

4 May we, accepted as we are,  
yet called in grace to grow,  
reach out to others, near and far,  
your healing love to show.

## 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

1 O day of peace that dimly shines  
through all our hopes and prayers and  
dreams,  
guide us to justice, truth, and love,  
delivered from our selfish schemes.  
May swords of hate fall from our  
hands,  
our hearts from envy find release,  
till by God's grace our warring world  
shall see Christ's promised reign of  
peace.

2 Then shall the wolf dwell with the  
lamb,  
nor shall the fierce devour the small;  
as beasts and cattle calmly graze,  
a little child shall lead them all.  
Then enemies shall learn to love,  
all creatures find their true accord;  
the hope of peace shall be fulfilled,  
for all the earth shall know the Lord.

(tune: Jerusalem) GtG 373 - Carl P Daw, jr

## Sung Blessing *"Deep Peace of the running wave to you - Gaelic Blessing"*

John Rutter

## Benediction

Music for our leaving *Prelude and Fugue in E minor 'The Cathedral'* BWV 533

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

An email is sent each week about Knox activities. If you would like to receive it, please speak with the person at the door. Some hard copies are available in the foyer.

## **Serving today**

Minister - Kerry Enright (0274675542)

Associate Minister - Jordan Redding

Organist and Choir Director - Karen Knudson

Reader - Carolyn Richardson

Prayer for others - Wendy Gunn

*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 before the service, into the offering boxes at the back of the church*

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