



KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

10am – Sunday 7 March 2021

The Third Sunday in Lent

Music to prepare us for worship *“Pavane” Gabriel Faure, “O Sacred head sore wounded” Johannes Brahms,
“Après un reve” Gabriel Faure (1845 – 1924)*

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 call of wisdom”*

Will Todd

Call to worship

(based on Psalm 19 - from Nan Merrill)

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

Ma Ihowa koe e manaaki. May God bless you.

The law of Love is perfect, **reviving the soul;**

The testimony of Love is sure, **making wise the simple;**

The precepts of Love are right, **rejoicing the heart;**

The authority of Love is pure, **enlightening the eyes;**

The spirit of Love is glorious, **enduring forever;**

The rites of Love are true, **awakening compassion.**

Let us worship the God of Love.

Hymn

(tune: Buinessan) CH4 212 - Eleanor Farjeon

1 Morning has broken
like the first morning,
blackbird has spoken
like the first bird.

Praise for the singing,
praise for the morning,
praise for them, springing
fresh from the Word.

2 Sweet the rain's new fall
sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall
on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness
of the wet garden,
sprung in completeness
where his feet pass.

3 Mine is the sunlight;
mine is the morning
born of the one light
Eden saw play.
Praise with elation,
praise every morning,
God's re-creation
of the new day.

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 *"The heavens are telling the glory of God"* text Psalm 19, music G F Haydn, from *"The Creation"*

Trio: Grace Togneri, Jesse Hanan, Jack Hanan/John Elder

Readings

Exodus 20:1-17

Then God spoke all these words: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall

labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work--you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it. Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

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

John 2:13-22

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

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

Reflection “Staying Emancipated”

There's been a hot topic in the news over the last couple of weeks. What do we do about gangs? It's not hard to arouse emotions because gangs are easily identified – they wear patches. They often ride bikes. And they often seem scary and for many New Zealanders they are not personally known. The Police Commissioner, Andrew Coster, has been criticised for not doing enough to arrest gang members. The criticism seems to be that as a nation we should not try to build relationships with groups of people who have become disconnected from the wider community, out of sync with the way things work and drawn into unhelpful groupings. Coster seems to be among those who resist simple solutions. He spoke of a whole of community approach and the importance of addressing the root causes of crime. He seemed to ask the question – why do we have gangs. And seemed to suggest that a punitive approach alone would not solve much. He speaks of the old principle of policing with consent, of seeking to build relationships with community groups.

There are people who approach the Ten Commandments with punishment in mind. “Our nation might be better if we could legislate the Commandments”, they might say, “and if we punished those who break them.” It is not surprising then that a survey of New Zealand attitudes a few years saw the Ten Commandments as irrelevant to modern society, perhaps because they were too negative and too exclusive. That response is understandable – “You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol. You shall not bow down. I am a jealous God ...”

However, in the early years of our nation's history, the Commandments were valued by many. At a conference about land in Auckland in 1860, a Maori speaker expected the Governor of New Zealand to punish Pakeha for breaking the commandments. Maori leaders often quoted the Commandments when they were trying to persuade the Crown to honour the Treaty and when they were resisting Pakeha occupation of Maori land. Maurice Andrew notes that many Maori leaders saw Maori and Pakeha bound together in love by a common, divinely based law.

Bound together in love. Building relationships. That is closer to the spirit of the Commandments.

In what follows I am very grateful to be able to borrow concepts and words from Walter Brueggemann, a scholar of the Hebrew Scriptures. Walter Brueggemann calls the Ten Commandments Strategies for Staying Emancipated or perhaps rules for staying free. In the story we heard in the book of Exodus, the Ten Commandments were given to Israel by Moses at Mt. Sinai just after the Israelites had left Egyptian slavery. So, says Brueggemann, the Ten Commandments are rules by which Israel was to maintain their recent freedom from Egypt. The Commandments begin with the identification of the God who liberated Israel from Egypt: *I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt...*

The word "Egypt" refers to Pharaoh, and Pharaoh is the abusive, brutalizing king of Egypt who practiced and exploited a concentration of power and wealth. Perhaps deliberately, we do not know Pharaoh's name because Pharaoh keeps turning up in our history time after time. So, Pharaoh is the right name for every brutalizing concentration of wealth and power that acts in violence against vulnerable people. The Exodus is the powerful acknowledgement of that brutalising domain of human history from which we have been emancipated. At the outset, the Ten Commandments named this liberating God: I am the Lord your God. I am the Lord of the Exodus. I am the God who set you free. I am the Lord of new promises. It is an announcement that the world is under new governance. In this understanding, the Commandments are rules for freedom and justice that contrast with the bondage and injustice of Pharaoh. The covenant at Sinai is a warning that if you do not keep these commandments, you will be back in the grip of Pharaoh and his insatiable demands. Back to having to produce on demand. Back in the rat-race of production and consumption. Back in fear and anxiety and alienation. Back in hostility toward the neighbour.

So the Ten Commandments are strategies for staying free once you get away from Pharaoh. This new strategy, first of all, says you have to honour God - that's the first three commandments - to the exclusion of every idol, every god-like claim, anything that tries to define who we are and what we are to do, that imposes on us names or categories that put us in our place and keep us there. So it includes every god-like "ism" such as racism, or sexism, or nationalism, or the worship of material things. The last part of this new strategy, the last Commandments, ask us to take the neighbour with utmost seriousness. So, the last five commandments are about the neighbour and treating neighbours with legitimacy and dignity and respect, especially disadvantaged neighbours - not to violate the neighbour for the sake of greed. Between these two commandments of honouring God and taking the neighbour seriously, at the centre of the Ten Commandments, is Sabbath day. Keep Sabbath: take a break from the rat-race of busyness and exhaustion and do not let Pharaoh define your life. Keep Sabbath and let creation rest; let humankind rest; let activity cease. We had a taste of this in level 4.

Each of these strategies contrast with the way of Pharaoh. Pharaoh wants to keep you subject to his divine authority. He wants to define who you are and what you are to do just as the economic system of our day does. "You are a consumer. You are an economic unit. You are a worker." And Pharaoh believes that there are no real neighbours. And Pharaoh never stops for Sabbath. Moses at Mt. Sinai declares that there are new possibilities for life beyond the pressures of anxiety and fearfulness and greed.

We are presently in the Christian season of Lent. At least in part, Lent is a process of moving our life into new zones of reality. So, there are at least three tasks to perform in Lent. The first task is to recognize the ways in which we have accepted Pharaoh's domain as normal. We have normalised anxiety. We have normalized scarcity. We have normalized exhaustion. We have normalised inequality. And often we have imagined punishment will build a nation. We have normalized a way of living that is in violation of the Ten Commandments. The second work of Lent is to recognize the deep alternative into which Moses and then Jesus invites us. So, when Jesus called his first disciples and said, "Follow me," he invited them to an alternative life that wasn't preoccupied with fear, that wasn't preoccupied with scarcity and that wasn't preoccupied with exhaustion.

So, the first task of Lent is to see Pharaoh clearly and the second task of Lent is to ponder the strategies for freedom that are offered by Moses and then by Jesus. Lent invites us to act with purpose and discipline, the kind that every addict must practice in order to break addictive habits. Lent invites us to put what we ask of people into the context of their relationship with God, with each other, and with creation. The Ten Commandments provide a framework for building relationships that enable a nation to be free. Without such work, we find ourselves back in a system that cannot make us safe and cannot make us happy and

cannot make us a nation. The good news is that God intends otherwise for us and has shown us how to get there.

Hymn

(tune: Heaven shall not wait) CH4 362 - Graham Maule and John L Bell

1 Heaven shall not wait
for the poor to lose their patience,
the scorned to smile, the despised to
find a friend:
Jesus is Lord;
he has championed the unwanted;
in him injustice confronts its timely
end.

3 Heaven shall not wait
for the dawn of great ideas,
thoughts of compassion divorced from
cries of pain:
Jesus is Lord;
he has married word and action;
his cross and company make his
purpose plain.

2 Heaven shall not wait
for the rich to share their fortunes,
the proud to fall, the élite to tend the
least:
Jesus is Lord;
he has shown the master's privilege –
to kneel and wash servant's feet before
they feast.

4 Heaven shall not wait
for triumphant Hallelujahs,
when earth has passed and we reach
another shore:
Jesus is Lord
in our present imperfection;
his power and love are for now; and
then for evermore.

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

Refrain

Let justice roll down like a river,
let justice roll down like a sea,
let justice roll down like a river,
let justice begin through me.

1 Justice for all who go hungry,
crying to God to be fed,
left in a world of abundance
to beg for a morsel of bread.

(tune: Let justice roll down like a river) AA 85 - Colin Gibson

2 Justice for those who are homeless,
victims of warfare or need,
trapped on the borders of nowhere,
lost in the canyons of greed.

3 Justice for all who are powerless,
yearning for freedom in vain,
plundered, and robbed of their
birthright
silently bearing their pain.

Benediction

Music for our leaving "*Toccata from Suite Gothique*"

Léon Boëllmann

Note: Today's sermon draws on ideas from a sermon the Old Testament theologian Walter Brueggemann preached at Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta, USA in 2018. It can be found at [Walter Brueggemann: Strategies for Staying Emancipated | Day 1](#)

Serving today

Minister - Kerry Enright (0274675542)
Associate Minister - Jordan Redding
Organist and Choir Director - Karen Knudson
Reader - John Rough
Prayer for others - Lincoln Coe

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*