



KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

10am – Sunday 25 April 2021

The fourth Sunday of Easter
Rātapu tuawhā o te aranga

Music to prepare us for worship
“Prelude in C sharp minor- Raindrop”

Organist: Graham Murray
Frédéric Chopin (1810- 1849)

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 *“Agnus Dei- O lamb of God”*

Karl Jenkins (from The Armed Man, a mass for peace)

Call to worship

(inspired by Psalm 23)

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

Mā Ihowā koe e manaaki. May God bless you.

In the darkest valley, at the banquet table;

in the hard work of life, in the moments of ease;

in our day-to-day reality, at times set aside -

for worship, for listening, for paying attention;

with every step we take:

goodness and mercy follow us; our cups overflow.

Hymn

CH4 355 - Sylvia Dunstan

1 You, Lord, are both Lamb and Shepherd.

You, Lord, are both prince and slave.

You, peacemaker and sword-bringer
in the way you took and gave.

You, the everlasting instant;

you, whom we both scorn and crave.

2. Clothed in light upon the mountain,

stripped of might upon the cross,

shining in eternal glory,

harrowing hell to save the lost,

you, the everlasting instant;

you, who are our gift and cost.

3 You, who walk each day beside us,
sit in power at God's side.

You, who preach a way that's narrow,
have a love that reaches wide.

You, the everlasting instant;

you, who are our pilgrim guide.

4 Worthy is our earthly Jesus!

Worthy is our cosmic Christ!

Worthy your defeat and vict'ry.

Worthy still your peace and strife.

You, the everlasting instant;

you, who are our death and life.

Assurance of forgiveness and passing of the peace

E te whānau a te Karaiti, brothers and sisters in Christ, we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Kia tau te rangimārie o te Karaiti ki runga i a koutou. May the peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Children

Hymn

CH4 14 - Psalm 23

1 The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
in pastures green: he leadeth me
the quiet waters by.

4 My table thou hast furnishèd
in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.

2 My soul he doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
even for his own name's sake.

5 Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me:
and in God's house for evermore
my dwelling-place shall be.

3 Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
yet will I fear no ill:
for thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

Readings

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff-- they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

1 John 3:1-7

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church

Thanks be to God

John 10:11-18

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away--and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."

This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Praise to Christ the Word

Music *"O you who sleep"*

text Moina Michael, Music Karen Knudson 2015

(Moina Michael was an American poet, humanitarian and university professor who, having read John McCrae's evocative poem about Flanders Fields, conceived the idea of making the poppy a symbol of remembrance for the millions of lives lost in World War I.)

Reflection "On being known"

Diversity. In this congregation there are people who do not know what a typewriter is and people who do not know what facebook is, people who communicate mainly electronically and people without a cellphone. People live in Waikouaiti in the north, Brighton in the south, Middlemarch in the East and Portobello in the West, and many places in-between. There are people who are straight and people who are gay, women and men and people who do not identify with a particular gender. There are people who are single and people in relationships, people who are married and people who are widowed and people who are divorced. There are people whose heritage is anglo-celtic, people who are Maori, people from Asia, from America, from Africa, from Europe and other places, people who identify with nations of the Pacific. There are people in their nineties and people not yet ten, people who have lived in Dunedin all their life and people who shifted here recently. People who speak many languages and people who speak one. Some people live in boarding houses, some in colleges, some in rented accommodation, some board, some flat, some own their own homes and some are confined to home or a room. Some have no savings and some have millions. Some are looking for work, some work, some have retired. There are people who cannot walk, people who cannot hear and people who cannot see.

There are people who have experienced many different congregations in different countries or cities and there are people who have spent nearly all their years associated with this congregation. There are people who cannot remember being away from the church, people who have come to faith in recent times and people who never had anything to do with a church until they came here. There are people with a deep understanding of the scriptures and people who are just beginning to learn what the Bible is for. There are people who have prayed for decades and people who are only now beginning to pray and people yet to pray. There are people for whom Christian imagery is familiar and people who are hearing images for the first time. There are people who have been Presbyterian from birth and people whose first experience of Presbyterianism is in this congregation.

There are people for whom God is a metaphor for the most worthy of human aspirations and people who believe God interacts with them every moment of every day.

There are people who are used to raising their arms in worship, singing songs, and for whom guitars and drums are normal. And there are people whose style is subdued. There are people who sing hymns and people who have never sung hymns before. There are people who have not worshipped with a choir and organ and people who cannot remember anything else. There are people whose faith is sure, even when they doubt, and people barely holding on, people for whom talking about experiencing God is normal and people who don't know what to make of that. There are people who would not know what to do when a church person visited and some who ask why people don't visit. There are people who like this minister very much and people who can't stand him, people moving into faith and people moving out of faith, people who relish change and people who resent it every step of the way.

And we have only just scratched the surface.

Diversity. One of the great gifts of being church. So how does unity work?

It doesn't work when we treat the church like any other organisation, like rotary or the local bowling club or any social group. We are not volunteers in an organisation or members of a club or admirers of music or keepers of inherited ritual or protectors of a heritage or lobbyists for our view. We are not bound in the church by any common interest or shared preference or family connection. When we try to apply such categories, we exclude or isolate or sideline people. We fail to reflect God's diversity. To make those bodies work, people resort to concepts of obligation and duty and voluntarism that don't work in a church.

As the theologian Moltmann said, a church is not birds of a feather flocking together. So what about unity?

The only aspect people in the church are to have in common is a sense of moving towards Jesus Christ. Christ is the one who draws us together and turns us to each other and to the world. Christ is big enough and inclusive enough to enable a church to be church. Our diversity witnesses to the power of Christ to hold us. God is decisively present in a lovingly inclusive Christ from whom springs our unity and our relationships with each other.

My old minister Owen Baragwanath used to speak of how people could wander around the mountain in search of each other, calling out and not hearing each other. Only as they moved towards the summit did they move towards each other. Only in moving towards the Christ together do we encounter each other more deeply and learn how to relate to each other. The power of Christ is what enables diversity and sustains unity. We are invited to trust that power.

Which brings us to the image of good shepherd. Now in many ways the Biblical concept of God as shepherd doesn't work in New Zealand. When I was ten my cousin who was a sheep farmer introduced me to docking, cutting off the tails of sheep. "You stand over here Kerry against this fence." When he cut off the tail, the blood spurted straight at me and I fainted. He knew I would. I was a townie. He wanted me to know how tough farmers were. The good shepherd is no softie.

Biblical scholars suggest that the translation that speaks of the shepherd laying down his life for the sheep is not the best one. Better to translate as "risking life for the sheep". It is a smelly, risky, uncertain, unpredictable and dangerous occupation. In Biblical imagery, the

shepherd is to lead, guide, feed, protect and seek lost sheep. The goodness of the shepherd is in knowing and being known by the sheep, gathering the sheep together and risking one's life for the sheep. God is a good shepherd. Jesus is a good shepherd. By contrast, the hired hand is there to do a job, to perform a function, to enact a transaction, to fulfil a duty. I will do this for you and you do this for me. Contractual.

Scott Greer who is a professor of sociology and urban studies notes how transactional patterns of life find communal expression in what he calls communities of limited liability. Don't risk too much and if the losses are too great, and my needs are not being met, then withdraw, get out. Communities of limited liability. Hired hands. Transactional arrangements.

Whereas the church is a covenant people, in which people risk themselves for others, especially people who are vulnerable or broken-hearted or oppressed, people who are captives and prisoners. Covenant people, shepherd people, are driven by notions of solidarity and community. They see themselves as part of a body together in which they encourage each other and attend to each other and especially those who are not of the fold.

This is a gritty and challenging gift. One writer puts it like this ... "As the Good Shepherd, Jesus loves the obstinate and the lost. He lives at the edges of polite society, out in the wild, untamed places of the world. His life remains perpetually in danger. He faces again and again the mockery and abandonment of the hirelings, who consider his self-sacrificial vocation absurd. Because he's in it for the long haul, he not only frolics with lambs, but wrestles with wolves. He not only tends the wounds of his beloved rams and ewes; he buries them when their time comes."

There are few more life-changing experiences than that of being fully known, and loved just as we are. Being known and yet being accepted, whoever we are, however we are. That is what drew me to the church as a student, a quality as intimate and personal as that. And the moment I experienced it most dramatically was when, after a short conversation, my minister invited me to kneel with him in front of his desk. And then he led in prayer. A deep sense of being known and loved and held washed over me. He wasn't the one who knew me. He took me with him to the one who did, to God the good shepherd.

Over the next months, Knox is going to be planning how we can be followers of the shepherd together. The Reverend Peg Pfab is a retired minister from the United States and is working with folk to refresh how we connect with each other and beyond the gathered congregation, the joy of being with people so that they experience being known by Christ.

Prayer – God, grant us again your great spirit, that our diversity may flourish and our unity deepen. In Christ. Amen.

Hymn

HIOS 61 Music: Colin Gibson, Words: Shirley Murray

1 Honour the dead, our country's fighting
brave,
honour our children left in foreign grave,
where poppies blow and sorrow seeds her
flowers,
honour the crosses marked forever ours.

2 Weep for the places ravaged with our blood,
weep for the young bones buried in the mud,
weep for the powers of violence and greed,
weep for the deals done in the name of need.

3 Honour the brave whose conscience was their call,
answered no bugle, went against the wall,
suffered in prisons of contempt and shame,
branded as cowards, in our country's name.

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.

4 Weep for the waste of all that might have been,
weep for the cost that war has made obscene,
weep for the homes that ache with human pain,
weep that we ever sanction war again.

5 Honour the dream for which our nation bled,
held now in trust to justify the dead,
honour their vision on this solemn day:
peace known in freedom, peace the only way.

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.

Blessing *"May the soft light at the end of the day heal you, who walk the earth"*

David Hamilton (NZ composer)

Hymn

CH4 260 - William Whiting

1 Eternal Father, strong to save,
whose arm restrains the restless wave,
who told the mighty ocean deep
its own appointed bounds to keep:
we cry, O God of majesty,
for those in peril on the sea.

2 O Christ, whose voice the waters heard
and hushed their raging at your word,
who walked across the surging deep,
and in the storm lay calm in sleep:
we pray, O Lord of Galilee,
for those in peril on the sea.

3 Creator Spirit, by whose breath

were fashioned sea and sky and earth;
who made the story chaos cease,
and give us life and light and peace:
we pray, O Spirit, strong and free,
for those in peril on the sea.

4 O Trinity of love and power,
preserve their lives in danger's hour;
from rock and tempest, flood and flame,
protect them by your holy name:
and to your glory let there be
glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

Benediction

Music for our leaving "*Adagio in G minor*"

Tomaso Albinoni, (1671-1751) arr Remo Giazotto (1910-1998)

Serving today

Minister - Kerry Enright (0274675542)

Associate Minister - Jordan Redding

Organist and Choir Director - Karen Knudson

Reader - Geoff Swift

Prayer for others - Sara Brown

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*