



KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

10am – Sunday 23 May 2021

Pentecost

Music to prepare us for worship “Prelude on Down Ampney - Come down O love Divine” Henry G Ley,
“Veni creator Spiritus” Leo Sowerby (1963), “Veni Creator Spiritus” John Cook (1956)

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

Introit “If ye love me” “If ye love me- and I will give another comforter, even the spirit of truth”

music Thomas Tallis (1505-85)

Greeting

Kia noho a Ihowā ki a koutou. The Lord be with you.

Ma Ihowā koe e manaaki. The Lord bless you.

...

The love of God has been poured out for all

Open the channels of our hearts

The vision of justice is imprinted in the heavens

Free us to work for a fair and peaceable world

The Advocate stands by us

Show us the way ahead

Hymn

words and music © Malcolm Gordon

1 Cast your korowai tapu around
Gather all of your children here now
Priest and pilgrim and prodigal, we
Woven into your family tree.

*Aue! Aue! Hear us, Lord, we pray
O Gather us, shield us, Lord of grace*

2 Throw your korowai tapu around
Cover us in your grace so unbound
Fam’ly ring and the richest of robes
Mark us out as the people you chose.

*Aue! Aue! Hear us, Lord, we pray
O Gather us, shield us, Lord of grace*

3 Weave your korowai tapu around
Shield and warmth for the lost and
the found
Grace, embrace ‘round the shoulders
of all

Dignity for the least and the poor.

*Aue! Aue! Hear us, Lord, we pray
O Gather us, shield us, Lord of grace*

Cast your Korowai Tapu around.

Gather your children here now.

Priest and pilgrim and prodigal, we.

Woven into your family tree.

Opening prayer

...

E te whanau a te Karaiti, family of Christ, we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Sharing Christ's peace with one another

Knox Church has a tradition of "sharing Christ's peace" with one another, which involves making a greeting of peace and saying, "the peace of Christ be with you." The response is "and also with you." At Covid Level One, we encourage people to be thoughtful of social distancing and practise non-tactile forms of greeting (i.e. a hand-wave).

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.

Interlude *"If ye love me- and I will give another comforter, even the spirit of truth"* music Paul Aston (2010)

Carolyn Schmid/organ

Words matter!

Hymn

(tune: Ellen) CH4 597 - Shirley Murray

1 Loving Spirit, loving Spirit,
you have chosen me to be,
you have drawn me to your wonder,
you have set your sign on me.

3 Friend and lover, in your closeness
I am known and held and blest,
in your promise is my comfort,
in your presence I may rest.

2 Like a mother, you enfold me,
hold my life within your own,
feed me with your very body,
form me of your flesh and bone.

First bible reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD." So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived,

and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act," says the LORD.

Second bible reading: Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs--in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine." But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

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

Gospel reading: John 15:26-27

"When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

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

Sermon "Our hearts in hiding"

None of us, I presume, takes the story of Pentecost literally any more, flames around the head, people of different languages chatting together in some sort of divine Esperanto. We know this is figurative stuff, the language of prophecy, of empowerment Language as every biblical scholar knows, is not the outer clothing of thought, values. The way we speak goes to the heart of who we are. Metaphor is the high road to all philosophy. And we forget too soon that with Jesus, the seannachie, the story teller, with Paul, the smart talker, with the early church, **a quite new language** came into the jaundiced Classical world. In literary terms the Gospels and Paul are amazing, chaperoning a brand new vocabulary for life, death, faith, hope, charity. With Augustine, biography becomes possible. A new language as the key to a new humanity. So we no longer talk by one another (Ha ha!)

Friends we think too little about language. It's crucial. Bad language is not swearing. It's talking in clichés, in jargon, professional, religious, sentimental clap-trap. Language is what makes us humans human.

Here in Knox we have the language of the organ, bracketing the service, taking us right out of ourselves. The language of hymns, which moves us beyond words. Anthems, the marvellous kick in the posterior the choir can give us, shaking the very rafters of our psyche; these soaring sopranos. Our marvelous children's choir. Now and then, too, Jordan treats us to a new musical way into prayer.

The language of sacred dance, pioneered in this country by Shona MacTavish, a life-long friend of Knox. The language of the sermon, which is so different from a lecture or a talk, because it makes the outrageous and bone-chilling claim to be channeling the sacred, the numinous, and, most eloquent of all, we know the language of silence.

So we in Knox do speak in tongues. Pentecost then, the opposite, as you know, to the story of the Tower of Babel, when humans got above themselves, and communication chaos set in.

Today as we look around the world we are closer to Babel than to Pentecost. Fake News OK. Look at the USA, two countries, split right down the middle. Fox News and CNN. No common language. Jerusalem. Israelis and Arabs. Look at ourselves in the Church, caught so often in a **churchy** language. For most Kiwis our religious talk is gobbledy gook, a hermetic code,

Pentecost is about the discovery, the recovery of language. God's most precious gift to us. Never easy. Poets, artists spend much of their lives in despair, searching for that elusive word, image, metaphor. (I'm trying desperately to learn Gaelic, when everything from pronunciation, to spelling, to vocabulary to syntax ties me up in knots, and utter humiliation, till Alison helps me out.)

The marvelous Jesuit, poet, Gerald Manley Hopkins sees a falcon ride the air

My heart in hiding

Stirred for a bird, – the achieve of, the mastery of the thing

And what, pray, is the falcon a symbol of, what is it that stirs us in the very abyss /hiddenness of our hearts?

Our generation faces incredible challenges: to the environment, to democracy, to global health, the yawning gap between rich and poor. It feels like Babel. It is Babel.

And with these apocalyptic challenges, **theological** challenges. When I began my ministry being radical was easy, because you could take for granted 90% as foundational and feel brave and radical questioning the Virgin Birth or Jesus physical resurrection. But today everything is in question. Where can you even begin?

Facing down death by the Nazi hangman, facing down the terrible shame of the Germany he loved Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his *Letters and Papers from Prison* turned to poetry. Wonderful stuff.

Von guten Mächten wunderbar geborgen,
Erwarten wir getrost, was kommen mag.
Gott ist mit uns am Abend und am morgen
und ganz gewiss an jedem neuen Tag.

*Kept safe and sound by the good powers.
We'll face whatever lies ahead.
God is with us from dawn to darkness
And for sure on each new day*

Despairing of a church mired in piety and sentiment and fearfulness Bonhoeffer set about forging an edgy new language:

What distinguishes Christians from pagans is that they stand by God in his suffering.

Being Christian is not about being religious but being Christ to others in the life of the world.

Unless it is there for others the Church has no right at all to exist.

We have to learn to speak of God in a non-religious way.

abandon God talk unless you are crying out on behalf of the Jews.

We are Bonhoeffer people or we are nothing. Like him we encounter radical evil every time we open our eyes;

David Attenborough: everything precious in our culture is now threatened with extinction by the climate crisis.

No easy words for all this. Still less easy answers or actions. Yet as the kaitiaki of three thousand years of Judaeo-Christian prophetic agony and ecstasy we should not underplay our Pentecostal calling.

To find a new language for LIFE.

We can make a beginning, forge a language of resistance. Inch by inch stuff. I do pray that what I am saying here is not some pulpit rhetoric. I do believe this: that without the empowerment given by the Spirit, that raging wind and fierce fire in the belly which Pentecost is on about we will crumble

*This is not
the age of information.*

*This is not
the age of information.*

*Forget the news,
and the radio,
and the blurred screen.*

*This is the time of loaves
and fishes.*

*People are hungry,
and one good word is bread
for a thousand.*

David Whyte

What are the values we need to undergird a truly human society. If we can contribute to reflection on that, what a privilege.

When it get too black I think of my wonderful colleagues in the East German Church under Communism who won over hearts because of their sober language, their Sachlichkeit, their nailing of reality, their edgy integrity of life and language for decades. It was this which enabled them with gutsy allies in the cultural and political world to facilitate that unbelievable miracle in 1989 - the Berlin Wall collapsing ohne Gewalt, without violence.

I know this is scary stuff. We are ordinary folk, no Bonhoeffers or Martin Luther Kings. But in Knox are already exploring an angular language, in our praying and preaching, in our daily work and living, in our submission to the Commission on Climate Change. In our recent words to Synod. Let's continue to explore gently but determinedly what being angular means in this smooth culture of ours.

My heart in hiding

Stirred for a bird, – the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Hymn

lyrics and music: Jordan Redding

1 Come, Holy Spirit, breathe new life in us
Strengthen these dry bones with new flesh and blood
Join us with Jesus, risen, victorious
Come, Holy Spirit, breathe new life in us

3 Lord, Holy Spirit, break into our tomb
Come, vivify us, cast out fear and gloom
Peace be within us, peace be around us
Lord, Holy Spirit, break into our tomb

2 Come, Holy Spirit, falling like a dove
Call us with Jesus, prophets of God's love
Choose us and bless us, break us and give us
Come, Holy Spirit, falling like a dove

Offering

Prayer for others followed by 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.

Dedication of offering

Hymn

(tune: Abbot's Leigh) CH4 615 - Timothy Rees

1 Holy Spirit, ever living
as the Church's very life;
Holy Spirit, ever striving
through her in a ceaseless strife;
Holy Spirit, ever forming
in the Church the mind of Christ;
you we praise with endless worship
for your fruit and gifts unpriced.

2 Holy Spirit, ever working
through the Church's ministry;
quickening, strengthening, and
absolving,
setting captive sinners free;
Holy Spirit, ever binding
age to age and soul to soul
in a fellowship unending,
you we worship and extol.

Blessing

Music for our leaving *"Komm, Gott Schopher, heiliger Geist - Come God, Creator, Holy Ghost"* J S Bach (1685-1750)

Serving today

Officiating Minister - Jordan Redding

Preacher: Peter Matheson

Organist and Choir Director - Karen Knudson

Reader - Carol Grant

Prayers for Others - Janet Sim Elder

- *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*

In relation to your monetary offering, you may:

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