



KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

10am – Sunday 26 September 2021

Pentecost 18 / Ratapu tekau mā waru o te Petekoha

Music to prepare us for worship “*Leibster Jesu- Lord Jesus, we are here*” J S Bach (1685-1750), “*Sheep will safely graze*” J S Bach (1685-1750), “*Mache dich, mein Geist, bereit- Prepare thyself, my soul, watch and pray*” Johann Kittel (1732- 1809)

Welcome to worship

Call to worship

(adapted from the Iona community)

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

Ma lhowa koe a manaaki. May God bless you.

With nature in its power and beauty, with rain and wind and sunshine, with the ancient rocks and the budding flower, **we gather in praise of God.**

With believers and seekers the whole world wide, with people in every land, and speakers of every language, **we gather in praise of God.**

With Jesus who promised his presence and the Spirit who showers her blessings, **we gather in praise of God.**

Eternal God, Maker of the skies above, lowly Christ, Lover of the earth and its people, unfettered Spirit, Giver of gracious gifts, **you are present among us.**

O hidden mystery, sun behind all suns, soul within all souls, in all we touch, in all we meet, **you are present among us.**

As bearers of your image, we come to be reshaped; **dependent on your mercy, we ask to be made new.**

Hymn (recited)

CH4 181 - Folliot Sandford Pierpoint

1 For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies:

*Christ, our God, to you we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.*

2 For the beauty of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower,
sun and moon and stars of light: *[Refrain]*

3 For the joy of ear and eye,
for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony
linking sense to sound and sight: *[Refrain]*

4 For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild: *[Refrain]*

5 For each perfect gift and sign
of your love so freely given,
graces human and divine,
flowers of earth and buds of heaven:
[Refrain]

Prayer Kia inoi tatou – let us pray ...

Assurance of forgiveness

E te whanau a te Karaiti, family of Christ, we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God.**

Words of peace

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.**

Please make a gesture of peace towards people to whom you wish to pass the peace.

First reading – James 5:13-20

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest. My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

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

Gospel reading – Mark 9:38-50

John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward. "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. "For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

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

Reflection “A praying community”

There are many things I can do and many things I can't, unless I have to – roller coasters for example. I can't do roller coasters. The precipitous rolling. Over time, though, I have learned to do things I thought I couldn't.

There are many people who can handle many parts of being church – worshipping, interacting with others, reflecting on the Bible, trying to live ethically, helping practically, offering care, visiting the sick, but there is

one part with which many of us struggle – praying with others. Just don't ask me to pray with others, people say.

That reticence is understandable. We don't want to rush in. We try to do things well. We value theology and language. We're encouraged to be thoughtful about how we name God. When we come to God we want to be respectful. That's healthy, right? Of course, ministers are expected to pray at the drop of a hat, but that's understandable because they receive years of training.

The risk is that praying with others can become seen as a professional skill or an act that requires preparation. We can become afraid to pray for fear of doing it wrong or making a mistake or offending someone.

There is another barrier - our experiences of public reaction. I was once at the bedside of someone who had died, surrounded by family and friends. They were a person of faith so I asked the family if they would like me to pray. As soon as I asked the question, the room went cold. We moved from singing and talking, to awkward silence. They were afraid of what I would say. But the husband said ... yes, that would be good. And so I prayed a short prayer. And at the end, I could feel the relief that I had not used certain words, that I had not made people feel more awkward.

I am not sure what previous experiences those people had of prayer. Perhaps they were thinking of television evangelists.

Praying aloud in public is becoming more common. Functions commonly begin with karakia. A few months ago I went to a fundraiser at a surf club. The most secular event you could imagine. It began with karakia, a prayer. Everyone expected it. No one objected. A few weeks later, my sister and I had lunch with a family friend who was a kaumatua, a Maori elder. My sister and I were about to start eating but had the sense to pause, and the elder stood at the table and said grace in te reo Maori. Neither of us expected it. Neither asked for it. It was what he did. It was normal. It might become more normal for Pakeha. The te reo Maori movement sweeping our nation is making prayer an expected ritual, even if so far it is prayer in te reo Maori.

Which brings us to the letter of James. James brings big ideas to practical expression. He wants to make sure that someone takes responsibility for praying over people who are sick. He wants people who are sick to ask the elders to pray over them.

“Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.”

James imagines being part of a congregation that prays for others. In our day it is not just elders who pray. Many of us have been asked by friends to pray for a friend or a relative or a situation. A person facing a difficult choice, or applying for a new job, or having an operation or going through a time of grief. We always say, don't we - Of course I will pray. It's what we do.

Thursday a week ago, one of our Church Council members was making a presentation to the Justice select committee. A pretty intimidating venue. So we emailed the Church Council to surround her in prayer. It's what we do.

Joan had been diagnosed with breast cancer. She was young and fit and had a young family. She never expected to be sick and she was worried. She knew other people with breast cancer. What made it harder was, her husband struggled to know what to say, so he didn't say anything. She began treatment, she had chemotherapy, she was often tired, but still they hardly talked about it. Joan belonged to a church so she asked her group of friends at the church to pray for her. It was the most natural thing to do. It's what we do.

People in our congregation face many challenges and we pray for them. It's what we do.

In what I am about to say, I don't want to suggest that there is a right way to pray. What I want us to do is just to keep trying to pray, and as we go, reflect and try again. That's how we learn. I had only been a Christian for maybe a month, and found myself in a young adult group of about 20 seated in a circle, and we went person to person praying, and I realised I would have to say something. I had never prayed out loud before. But I gave it a go, and later I thought about what I did, and asked friends how to do it, and decided to learn more, and so next time I did it a bit different.

I am borrowing a pattern from Sam Wells of St Martin's in the Fields in London. I am not saying this is the right way to pray. I am saying, if you are nervous or afraid about praying out loud with others without

preparation, here is a possible way to start. Nothing more than that. The pattern is similar to what we see in many Psalms. Sam offers five steps.

The first step - approach God respectfully. Who might God be in this situation. So if we are praying for Joan, it might be, Tender hearted God or Companion God or Loving God or Gentle caring God or ?

The second step is to name how God has been faithful in the past, to remind God and ourselves of what God has done. It might be something from the Bible or something from our own experience. Caring God, we remember how Jesus came alongside people who were afraid. Or we remember how Jesus offered help to people who were unwell or Companion God, you journeyed with your people through all their struggles. A simple phrase that reminds God and us of God's faithfulness.

The third is to say what you are asking of God. Tender God, who in Jesus took flesh, keep Joan safe in your love. Or send your Spirit of healing into Joan's life or fill Joan with your spirit of peace or ...

The fourth is to name what God might change in our congregation or in the world. Tender God, who has held your people close when they suffer, fill Joan with your spirit of healing, and pour out your spirit on our Church that all who struggle feel supported.

The fifth is to end with "through Jesus Christ", and if we want to, we can add on a phrase – through Jesus Christ our companion on the journey.

Praying for others is what we do. When people have prayed with me in my struggles, I have felt lifted beyond what words can convey into the presence of God. It reframes what I am experiencing. It's what we do.

Music *"Rockingham- When I survey the wondrous cross"* Kenneth Leighton (1929-88)

Offering prayer

Prayer of thanks and 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.

Hymn (recited)

CH4 265 - Ruth Duck

1 Pray for a world where every child
finds welcome in a sheltered place,
where love is tender, undefiled,
and firmness intertwines with grace.

2 Pray for a world where passion's fire
burns not in force or careless lust,
where God's good gift of deep desire
is safe in arms of faith and trust.

3 Pray for a nation just and fair
that seeks the welfare of us all,
where leaders guide with prudent care
and nurture life for great and small.

4 Pray for a world where all have voice
and none will batter, rape, abuse.
Till then, may all have rightful choice
and pray for wisdom as they choose.

Blessing (from the Fourth Edition of the Church Hymnary 798)

The peace of the earth be with you, the peace of the heavens too; the peace of the rivers be with you, the peace of the oceans too. Deep peace falling over you; God's peace growing in you.

The benediction

Music for our leaving "*Passacaglia*" J S Bach (1685-1750)

Serving today

Minister - Kerry Enright

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Associate Minister - Jordan Redding

(jordan.redding@otago.ac.nz 0274285234)

Organist and Choir Director - Karen Knudson

Reader - Beulah Leitch

Prayers 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*