



# KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

10am – Sunday 21 November 2021

Reign of Christ Sunday / Te Rangatiratanga o te Karaiti Ratapu

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Music to prepare us for worship “*On an Irish Green*” John Thompson, “*Rondella*” Enrique Granados(1867-1916)  
played by Alexa Choie  
“*Allegretto*” Felix Mendelssohn (1809-47) played by Grace Togneri

## Welcome to worship

**Music** “*For the beauty of the earth*” music John Rutter (b. 1945) the Knox Junior Choir with the Knox Choir

## Call to worship

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

**Ma Ihowā koe a manaaki. May God bless you.**

We don't see it, but its effect is among us.

**We don't hear it, but its message is never silent.**

We don't feel it, but its influence constantly moves us.

**More powerful than the strongest, and more gentle;**

The reign of God is at work,

**It is here and now.**

## Hymn (*we will stand and sing while masked*)

(Dunedin) AA 155 - Shirley Murray

1 Where mountains rise to open skies  
your name, O God, is echoed far,  
from island beach to kauri's reach,  
in water's light, in lake and star.

2 Your people's heart, your people's part  
be in our caring for this land,  
for faith to flower, for aroha  
to let each other's mana stand.

3 Your love be known, compassion shown,  
that every child have equal scope:  
in justice done, in trust begun  
shall be our heritage and hope.

4 Where mountains rise to open skies  
your way of peace distil the air,  
your spirit bind all humankind,  
one covenant of life to share!

**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.**

## Passing the peace

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.**

*Please stand and make a gesture of peace towards people around you.*

## Hymn *(Please remain seated)*

GtG 750 - Desmond Tutu

Goodness is stronger than evil;  
love is stronger than hate;  
light is stronger than darkness,  
life is stronger than death.  
Victory is ours; victory is ours  
through God who loves us.

## First reading: Revelation 1:4-8

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

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

## Anthem "*Rex Tremendae Majestatis - King of tremendous majesty*" W A Mozart (1756-91)

to Mark Christ the King

## Gospel reading: John 18:33-37

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." *This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ* **Praise to Christ the Word**

## Sermon "... not from this world"

I was at an international conference and had been listening to a Palestinian theologian, Mitri Raheb. He talked about Jesus and Palestine and outlined steps to end the conflict there. After the presentation, a colleague and I were leaving the hall and on the way he said – what did you think of that? Wasn't it brilliant I said. Clear, inspiring, biblical. My colleague said "I thought it was terrible. He spoke entirely about this world. Jesus said "my kingdom is not of this world."" The conversation ended as we headed for our different meetings.

I had not heard that phrase used in that way. Do you notice the different translation. He said “of this world” whereas our translation says “from this world”. The Greek word is ek which can mean of or from. How we translate that word makes a difference here. My colleague was suggesting that Jesus had to do with a world apart from this world and that Jesus was not as concerned with this world as he did for another one. Is that what Jesus meant?

Think of the setting for this exchange. Jesus stood before Pilate and there was no doubt that Pilate was the ruler. Everything proclaimed it. A great building, fine clothes, many servants, a strong army, a notorious reputation for cruelty, the questioning of Jesus. Here was a powerful politician, a ruler who gave orders and knew they would be actioned.

By contrast ... Jesus at his physical and emotional worst: dishevelled, harassed, hungry, abandoned, sleep-deprived —standing before the notoriously cruel Pontius Pilate. And the week of this exchange, he was to be an arrested and falsely accused criminal. A dead man walking.

Jesus looks at Pilate, what got Pilate to where he was, what kept him there, this form of power, and Jesus says “My kingdom is not from this world.” The realm of Jesus does not come from the world of Pilate, the world of the Roman army, of vying for authority, of seeking popular support, of imposing truth, of shutting down opposition and killing opponents. Jesus is saying ... my kingdom is not from your world.

In the process, Jesus puts that kingdom in its place. One day it would end, along with the Temple, because it did not have the moral or truthful or spiritual authority to sustain it. Pilate’s power soon turned to dust.

This haggard and harassed nondescript Jesus represented a kingdom that continued long after Pilate’s ended. But it was a different rule, a reign of consistent service and enduring love, of wooing and winning the hearts and minds of people. It was power as servant hood in service of truth and it sets out how we are invited to exercise power.

Today we mark White Ribbon Sunday which is for overcoming the abuse of power. As a child I saw a man strike a woman. I was so shocked and disturbed and unsettled, all I could do was hide. Sixty years later, I remember it vividly, where it happened and especially what I felt. It shook my sense of safety, to learn that people could treat each other like that.

Adapting words provided for White Ribbon Sunday ... men especially need to learn more healthy ways to be men, to be healthier versions of masculinity, to be who they were made to be and to express emotions safely. As the White Ribbon resource says, the more we men talk about having respectful relationships and the many different ways we can be men, the more we will learn how to properly exercise the power we have.

There is a hymn by Brian Wren – “Can a man be kind and caring? Jesus was. Can a man who’s kind and caring be adventuresome and daring, bravely doing right, walking in the light? Jesus did and so I can: I will be a Jesus man. Can a man be sad with crying? Jesus was. Can a man who’s sad with crying, shed his tears, yet keep on trying, loving to the end, enemy and friend? Jesus did and so I can: I will be a Jesus man. Can a man be hurt and broken?

Jesus was. Can a man who’s hurt and broken show his friends how God has spoken, giving to us then, power to start again? Jesus did and so I can: I will be a Jesus man.”

In New Zealand, we can learn from a part of our history for guidance and spirit, into traditional Māori attitudes to women and children from the pre-colonial period. In those days, women were more equal, children were affirmed and child abuse was rare. In the words of Ngāi Tahu leader Tā Mark Solomon “Abuse against a child, or against a woman, is an abuse against the whakapapa of the whole whānau. An abuse against a woman or a child led to war. It was never accepted.” Moreover, historical records suggest that the possibilities for Māori tāne were much broader before the importation of European models of masculinity. These records suggest that Māori men were looked down upon by Pākehā for lacking stoic ‘masculine’ behaviours, and were instead talkative and animated, doing the same work as women, and readily expressing their emotions.

The exchange between Jesus and Pilate is about power and how it is exercised, but also about truth. The two are closely related.

Jesus says - "For this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

And Pilate asks: "What is truth?" Jesus doesn't immediately respond, with words. His silence seems to say: "You're looking at it." "You're looking at the truth. I am the truth." In other words, truth isn't an instrument, a weapon, or a slogan. The truth is the life of Jesus, the way of Jesus, the love of Jesus. He is truth's most complete and complex embodiment, just as he is of power.

We need to pay attention to what is happening with truth in our time. In some quarters, truth has become a matter of opinion. One person's truth is as good as another. In the process, for some people, truth has ceased to be public, ceased to be the result of careful study and considered discussion and disciplined focus. We have entered an era where truth has become associated with the exercise of power. Google search truth and up comes "The Death of Truth," "The Assault on Truth," "Notes on Falsehood," and "Our Post-Truth World." As Debie Thomas says, there is a culture of confident lies, sly exaggerations, doctored images, conspiracy theories, and fake news. Which makes it hard to listen to our best scholarship about climate change and pandemics.

But as Thomas says, on this Sunday of Christ the king - if truth is king, then "fake news" is not. If truth is king, then self-deception (however expedient or attractive) is not. If truth is king, then distorting inconvenient facts for political, racial, social, cultural, religious, or economic gain, is not.

The truth Jesus embodies in his life, death, and resurrection is not instrumental or to puff him up in any way. It does not serve to bolster his own power and authority. Quite the opposite — it humbles him. It empties him. It takes away his life.

When truth is being questioned, can we keep speaking of the gospel that has truth as its call, embodied in Jesus? Can we speak of power that is known in the humility of Jesus? Next week is Advent, when we wait again for the light to dawn, for the truth to reveal itself, for the first cries of a vulnerable baby to redefine truth and power forever. This truth endures when Pilate is dust.

## Hymn *(Please stand)*

(Triumph) CH4 355 - Sylvia G 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.

3 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.

2 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.

## Prayer for others

## The Lord's Prayer in English and Te Reo Maori

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.

**Gratitude for retiring pastoral conveners – Patti Matheson, Melville Carr,  
Jill Rutherford**

**Prayer for new pastoral conveners – Viv Graham, Gillian Vine, Vanessa Sinclair**

## Dedication of recording equipment

**Music** “Crown of Roses - The Legend” Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-93) Knox Junior Choristers, Knox Choir

## Offering prayer *(please stand)*

### Hymn *(we will stand and sing while masked)*

(The Servant King) CH4 374 - Graham Kendrick

1 From heaven you came, helpless babe,  
entered our world, your glory veiled;  
not to be served, but to serve,  
and give your life that we might live.

*This is our God, the Servant King,  
he calls us now to follow him,  
to bring our lives as a daily offering  
of worship to the Servant King.*

2 Come see his hands and his feet,  
the scars that speak of sacrifice,  
hands that flung stars into space  
to cruel nails surrendered.

[Refrain]

3 So let us learn how to serve,  
and in our lives enthrone him;  
each other's needs to prefer,  
for it is Christ we're serving.

[Refrain]

# Blessing

Music for our leaving “*Cebel*” Henry Purcell (1659-1695), arr. Colin Hand, played by Peter Stockwell

A whakatauki – “**Nau te rourou, naku te rourou, ka ora te manuhiri.**” –“With your food basket and my food basket, the people will thrive.”

## Serving today

Minister - Kerry Enright

(minister@knoxchurch.net 0274675442)

Associate Minister - Jordan Redding

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

Organist and Choir Director - Karen Knudson

Reader - Peter Stockwell

Prayers for Others - Janet Wishart

*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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