



# KNOX CHURCH, DUNEDIN

10am – Sunday 7 November 2021

Pentecost 24 - Parihaka Sunday

Music to prepare us for worship "*le Prie-Dieu*" George Oldroyd, "*Peace*" Mons Leidvin Takle

- played by Carolyn Schmid

"*The Modd that passes through you*" and "*The heart asks*" Michael Nyman - played by Grace Togneri

**Introit** "*Te lucis ante terminum*" Henry Balfour Gardiner (1877-1950)

*(Before the end of the day, Creator of the world, we pray Wouldst be our Guard and Keeper now.*

*From all ill dreams defend our eyes, From nightly fears and fantasies.*

*We ask this be done, Through Jesus Christ, Thine only Son;*

*Who, with the Holy Ghost and Thee, Doth live and reign eternally.)*

## Welcome and waiata

He hōnora, he korōria

Maungārongo ki te whenua

Whakaaro pai e

Ki ngā tangata katoa

Ake ake, ake ake

Āmine

Te Atua, te piringa,

Toku oranga

*Honour, glory and*

*peace to the land*

*May good thoughts*

*Come to humankind*

*For ever and ever*

*Amen*

*The Lord is my refuge*

*and my life.*

## Call to worship

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

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

And blessed be God, who has not left us alone without a redeemer:

**praise be to the God of our brother, Jesus Christ;**

for he is the restorer of our life

**and the nourisher of our souls.**

Nau mai, haere mai e Wairua Tapu.

Welcome, Spirit of God, open our lips,

**that our mouths may proclaim your praise.**

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

(Blaenwern) CH4 348 - Rusty Edwards

1 Praise the One who breaks the darkness  
with a liberating light.

Praise the One who frees the prisoners  
turning blindness into sight.

Praise the One who preached the Gospel,  
curing every dread disease,  
calming storms, and feeding thousands  
with the very bread of peace.

2 Praise the One who blessed the children  
with a strong yet gentle word.  
Praise the One who drove out demons  
with a piercing, two-edged sword.  
Praise the One who brings cool water  
to the desert's burning sand;  
from this well comes living water,  
quenching thirst in every land.

3 Praise the one true love incarnate,  
Christ, who suffered in our place.  
Jesus died and rose for many  
that we may know God by grace.  
Let us sing for joy and gladness,  
seeing what our God has done.  
Praise the one redeeming glory,  
praise the One who makes us one.

## **Act of remembrance**

We remember Parihaka,  
**and commit to the way of peace.**

## **Prayer of approach**

All praise to you, Jesus Christ,  
for you raise up all things,  
celebrating, sustaining, sanctifying  
the life that is in all and through all.  
We confess our sin.  
All that divides. All that separates. All that harms and diminishes.  
Pour out your peace upon us  
and redeem our life together  
that we may see your reign come on earth as in heaven.  
Amen.  
E te whānau a te Karaiti, family of Christ, we are forgiven. **Thanks be to God.**

## **Passing of 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)*

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 heavens too.  
Deep peace falling over you;  
God's peace growing in you.

## **First reading: Ruth 3:1-13, 4:13-17 amended**

Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, 'My daughter, I need to seek some security for you, so that it may be well with you. Now here is our kinsman Boaz, with whose young women you have been working. See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing-floor. Now wash and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing-floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, observe the place where he lies; then, go and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do.' She said to her, 'All that you tell me I will do.' So Ruth went down to the threshing-floor and did just as her mother-in-law had instructed her. When Boaz had eaten and drunk, and he was in a contented mood, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came quietly and uncovered his feet, and lay down. At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and there, lying at his feet, was a woman! He said, 'Who are you?' And she answered, 'I am Ruth, your servant; spread your cloak over your servant, for you are next-of-kin.' He said, 'May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter; this last instance of your loyalty is better than the first; you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, do not be afraid; I will do for you all that you ask, for all the assembly of my people know that you are a worthy woman. ... as the Lord lives, I will act as next-of-kin for you. Lie down until the morning.' So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When they came together, the Lord made her conceive, and she bore a son. Then the women said to Naomi, 'Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without next-of-kin; and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him.' Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom, and became his nurse. The women of the neighbourhood gave him a name, saying, 'A son has been born to Naomi.' They named him Obed; he became the father of Jesse, the father of David.

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

## **Gospel reading: Mark 12:38-44**

As he taught, he said, 'Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the market-places, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets! They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.' He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.'

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

## **Sermon**

On Friday morning at dawn, a group gathered at the Rongo stone on Portsmouth Drive, down by the causeway. "Rongo" means peace. And the stone commemorates the prisoners of Parihaka, who were imprisoned in the Dunedin Gaol and forced to do hard labour around the city including helping to build the causeway out to the peninsula.

The accepted kōrero, passed down through the whānau of survivors and of local Ōtākou Kai Tahu, is that the prisoners were kept in the caves, still visible today, while they laboured out there. In 2018, research was done that challenged the oral history, denying that the Parihaka men were ever kept in the caves, implying that it perhaps wasn't as bad as we thought it was.

Edward Ellison, a Kai Tahu kaumatua, responded, in turn raising questions of the research, which he claimed had diminished the authority of the oral history of tangata whenua and the recollection of the kaumatua that gave it.

Furthermore, he argued, whether or not the prisoners were kept in the caves, has "no impact whatsoever on the Crown's culpability and the complicit behaviour of those who colluded with the imprisonment of the Pakakohi and Parihaka men." In other words, it doesn't lessen the injustice.

The point is well made and brings to the fore the question of history: its subjective nature and the role that history plays in carving out the path for the future. Whether a future based on mutual understanding, trust, listening, reconciliation, the setting right of past wrongs ... or otherwise. Whose history are we telling? How are we telling it? What's the outcome, whether unintended or intended, of the stories we tell about ourselves? What future is it marking out for us?

For Ellison, truth telling through mutual respect and listening, especially to the oral recollections of tangata whenua, is essential in setting past wrongs to right and in continuing on the path of peace together.

In technical language, we could say that reconciliation – healed relationship – is inescapably bound up with redemption – the restoration of what was lost, the setting right of wrongs, the empowering, dignifying and liberating of those who have disempowered and subjugated.

And so today, the Sunday after Parihaka Day, I want to reflect on the loaded theological word, redemption.

The story of Ruth is a story of redemption. The redemption of Naomi, who has left her home to go into the far country, to Moab. And while there she loses everything: her husband, her social and legal status, her possessions. Indebted she is forced to sell her husband's land as well. So we have the redemption of Naomi. The story of how she came back into possession of what was lost.

And we also have the redemption of Ruth, who also lost her husband (Naomi's son) in Moab, and chose to go with Naomi back to Israel, out of single-minded devotion and yet with little hope of finding a new husband and establishing a life for herself. And so it's story of her redemption as well.

Today, we reach the climax of the story and hear how that redemption comes about. The redemption takes place through Naomi's next-of-kin, Boaz. Now, this requires a bit of explanation. The next-of-kin is a term we still use today. But according to the Torah, the Hebrew law, the next-of-kin had a special role to play: certain social and legal obligations, particularly regarding land ownership.

The ancient Hebrews had a very different view of land ownership than we do. Individuals did not own land. All the land was a gift, given by grace from God. Consequently, the land belonged to God and, through the patriarch, families were tenants, keepers, stewards of the land.

Sometimes, whether due to negligence, bad decisions, or unfortunate circumstances, people got into debt and needed to sell their land. And if this happened, it was the prerogative of the next-of-kin to redeem the land, to buy it off the indebted person to ensure it stayed in the family. Basically, it was a means of ensuring equality and protecting families from unfortunate circumstances that would have otherwise thrown them into a cycle of poverty.

The next-of-kin was seen as acting on behalf of God, redeeming the land, gifting it back to the family. An act of grace. And so the next-of-kin is also translated Redeemer elsewhere in the Bible.

There is something else rather surprising going on here though.

Boaz not only fulfils his duty as next-of-kin by buying Naomi's land. But his redeeming act is bound up, one-and-the-same, with his determination to marry Ruth. In marrying Ruth, he is fulfilling another social expectation. In the Torah, if a man died, his brother or another male relative was expected to marry the widow. And any children born from this second marriage would take the name of the dead man, ensuring that the family name lived on. What's more, the widow, who in a patriarchal society was very vulnerable with limited to no rights, came under the protection and social status of her new husband.

Sorry, a lot of historical analysis today, but it's really important. In this one act of marriage, Boaz and Ruth redeem Naomi on multiple levels. Through their marriage and their child, Naomi's name would live on, her genealogy restored. Her social status and legal rights were redeemed. Her land and possessions were gifted back. In other words, the redemption of the whole person in her social and cultural connections and the redemption of the land she depends on.

It's a very earthed, measurable, material understanding of redemption. When we talk about redemption or salvation in the church, we often think of a largely spiritual reality, an internalised and personal reality, something that has to do with eternal life beyond death. And certainly, in Jesus, those dimensions of redemption are there as the promises of God for life in fulness extend even beyond the grave.

But if the bodily resurrection of Jesus means nothing else, it's that redemption is also inescapably a bodily, material reality. A reality that is experienced now, albeit only partially, through the restoration of social status, the celebration of culture and language, the restoration and healing of land, truth telling of the past in order to bring healing in the present, the list could go on. We could talk about redemption in any number of ways. And on this Sunday after Parihaka, we might talk about it in some very concrete, particular ways.

I want to briefly touch one final element of redemption, specifically about Ruth's redemption. Perhaps the most surprising element of the story of Ruth is indicated by the name of the book. "Ruth". It's not called "Naomi." This story isn't primarily about Naomi, but about Ruth.

While the redemption story of Naomi is heartening, there's nothing particularly surprising about it. The Torah, the Hebrew law, was a remarkable ancient law that sought to put in place measures that protected the most vulnerable in society (like Naomi), the widows and the orphans and so on. These laws were built on grace, on the gift of God to provide for all God's people.

But therein lies the catch. God's people. The people of Israel. After all, she was an Israelite. As a daughter of the redeemed people of God, she was entitled to benefit from the law, to enjoy the fruit of God's redemption.

Ruth, on the other hand, was an alien, outside the redeemed community. The utterly subversive message of the book of Ruth to the people of Israel, is that the redeeming work of God extends beyond the people of Israel to include the outsider. Even more than that, that Naomi's redemption only comes about through Ruth, the outsider. Even more than that, that in marrying Boaz, the outsider's story had become intertwined into the genealogy of God's people. The outsider has become an integral part of God's redemption of Israel and indeed of the world. The story of Ruth ends with an unsettling genealogy. We're told that she is the great grandmother of King David, the symbol of the Jewish monarchy, of Jewish nationalism.

The author retells history, the whakapapa of Israel, in a new way that opens up the path to mutual listening, to engaging with "other", not as an outsider but as one whose story is inseparably bound up with my own. The author opens up the path, not of animosity and suspicion, but of recognition, inclusion, and peace.

Of course, for those of us who are Christian, the story of Ruth holds even more meaning. She is not only the ancestor of David. As we're told at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel, she is the ancestor of Jesus of Nazareth, God's Messiah, the one who fulfills and breaks the banks of God's redemptive promises.

Jesus is the fitting conclusion, the fulfilment of the story of Ruth.

He is both Ruth and Boaz. In Jesus we see the fulness of Ruth's remarkable, single-minded devotion to be with the vulnerable. To journey into the far country. To make herself vulnerable. To be the bride who bears the promises of Israel.

And just as Boaz was next-of-kin, so Jesus is the next-of-kin to every human being, who redeems humanity by stepping in. Giving of himself in order to restore the vulnerable and the undignified. Redeeming the promises of God, given in grace. Setting the wrongs to right. Wedding himself to the vulnerable that his wealth and privilege might be theirs... we can probably draw other connections.

In concluding, I want to draw attention to the pounamu I wear today. It was given to me by my dad at my ordination. And it was given to him by the then-moderator of Te Aka Puaho, Millie Te Kaawa. The pattern is the pikorua, the braided river. An apt symbol to commemorate Parihaka as we commit to the way of peace. In the braided river, the strands remain distinct and yet they are inseparably bound up, interacting playfully with one another, journeying together on a common path, a journey that leads ultimately to the same destination, the peace of ocean, the fullness of life together when peace will reign and God will be all in all. Amen.

## **Anthem** *"My love came through the city, but they did not know him"*

text James K Baxter, music Anthony Ritchie, Jesse Hanan / tenor soloist

### **Dedication of offering** *(please stand)*

Kia inoi tātou. Let us pray.

Generous God,

may this offering be a reminder for us that your way is costly.

Through the act of giving, transform our hearts like the widow.

May we learn to live in selfless generosity

as if our lives depended on it.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

### **Prayers for others** - *followed by the Lord's Prayer*

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

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1 Tama ngākau mārie,

Tama a te Atua,

Tēnei tonu mātou,

Arohaina mai.

2 Murua rā ngā hara:

Wetekina mai

Ēnei here kino,

Wakararu nei.

3 Takahia ki raro

Tau e kino ai;

Kei pā kaha tonu

Ko nga mahi hē.

4 Hōmai he aroha

Mōu i mate nei.

Tēnei ra, e Ihu,

Tākina e koe.

5 Tēnei arahina

A tutuki noa:

Putā i te pōuri,

Whiwhi hari nui.

# Blessing

## *followed by the threefold Amen*

Music for our leaving *Postlude in D minor, Op.77 No. 4* Alexandre Guilmant (1837-1911)

played by Peter Stockwell

A whakatauki – Tangata ako ana i te kaenga, te turanga ki te marae, tau ana. A person nurtured in the community contributes strongly to society.

### 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 - Barry Brown

Prayers for Others - Liz Miller

*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*