

# Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish

Sunday 16 March 2025 – Lent 2

Peter Koenig: *Hen and Fox*

<https://www.pwkoenig.co.uk/Portfolio/hen-and-fox>

Today's service is led by Jane Garrick, one of our Lay Preachers

## **Welcome to our service this morning.**

In working together on our shared mission, we commit to seven core values:

***Togetherness, Humility, Curiosity, Love, Inclusiveness, Justice, Sustainability.***

**Curiosity:** we are committed to a life of learning, questioning, and exploring the mystery of God, Jesus, and the Bible.

## **Welcome**

A warm welcome to you all. Today is the second Sunday in Lent. Last Sunday Kimberley explored the temptations of Jesus. She encouraged us to see through the distractions, knowing that God's spirit is with us every step of the way. This Lenten season she challenged us to step into His shoes, growing to become more and more like Jesus.

I'd like us to keep this in mind during today's service when we look at Jesus lamenting over Jerusalem and longing to gather His people together just like a mother hen does with her chicks.

You will see a link to a Peter Koenig painting on the front of the service sheet today. It is a representation of today's Scripture reading from Luke. The more I look at it, the more I see in it.

Let us join together in our Call to Worship:

## **Call to Worship**      *(from Psalm 27)*

The Lord is my light and my salvation—  
whom shall I fear?

**The Lord is the strength of my life—  
of whom shall I be afraid?**

Though an army besiege me,  
**my heart will not fear.**

One thing I ask from the Lord,  
this only do I seek:  
**that I may dwell in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life,**  
For in the day of trouble  
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;  
**he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent  
and set me high upon a rock.**  
Hear my voice when I call, Lord;  
**be merciful to me and answer me.**

Teach me your way, O Lord;  
**lead me in a straight path**  
I will remain confident of this:  
**I will see the goodness of the Lord  
in the land of the living.**  
Wait for the Lord;  
be strong and take heart  
and wait for the Lord.

### **Lenten Candle Liturgy**

On Sunday morning, for a brief space of time, we leave behind the world of home and work—the world where we have our lists of things to do, activities to participate in, tasks to complete. We come here this morning seeking something else. We come here seeking a shift—from the ordinary to the sacred, from doing to being. Let go of your list. You may wish to close your eyes. Recall that it is the season of Lent. Remember the parable of the sower. The sower throws the seed . . . and where it lands determines if it will grow or not grow. Think of it this way: think of the season of Lent as the sower, the time when seeds of faith are thrown with special intensity, as a time when God calls to us in a low, urgent voice. Listen. Jesus is being drawn to Jerusalem. Where is God calling you to? What is God calling you to do?

*(Silent time)*

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of injury done to God's children and His creation.

*(A candle is extinguished)*

*Let us pray:*

**Loving God, as we journey through this holy season of Lent, may we be open to Your presence. Give us the strength to make the changes that are needed in our lives and the courage to take on Your transformative work. Amen.**

**Hymn MP 50: [Be Still, For the Presence of the Lord](#)**

1. Be still, for the presence of the Lord,  
the Holy One, is here;  
come bow before Him now  
with reverence and fear:  
in Him no sin is found -  
we stand on holy ground.  
Be still, for the presence of the Lord,  
the Holy One, is here.
  
2. Be still, for the glory of the Lord  
is shining all around;  
He burns with holy fire,  
with splendour He is crowned:  
how awesome is the sight -  
our radiant King of light!  
Be still, for the glory of the Lord  
is shining all around.
  
3. Be still, for the power of the Lord  
is moving in this place:  
He comes to cleanse and heal,  
to minister His grace -  
no work too hard for Him.  
In faith receive from Him.  
Be still, for the power of the Lord  
is moving in this place.

**Prayer of Centering and Renewal**

Loving God, we often feel scattered and lost, separated from You and one another.

Gather us in.

Comfort us in our loneliness.

Dispel our fears.

Correct our wayward feet and strengthen our faith,

That we might hear Your voice, trust Your promises, and stand firm in Your ways.

In Your light and love we pray. **Amen**

*(Abingdon Worship Annual 2025)*

## **The Lord's Prayer**

*And now we pray as Jesus taught us, saying,*

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,**

**on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,**

**as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil,**

**for thine is the kingdom,**

**and the power,**

**and the glory forever and ever.**

**Amen.**

## **Words of Assurance**

Be strong and take heart.

God is with us here and now.

Christ's love is saving us, now and always. **Amen**

*(Abingdon Worship Annual 2025)*

## **Sharing the Peace**

Sisters and brothers, we are light for one another; even as Christ is light for each of us. Let's share signs of Christ's light and love as we pass the peace with one another.

## **Hymn MP 275: [I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say](#)**

I heard the voice of Jesus say,

"Come unto Me and rest;

Lay down, O weary one, lay down

Thy head upon My breast."

I came to Jesus as I was,

Weary, and worn, and sad;

I found in him a resting-place,

And he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,

"Behold, I freely give

The living water; thirsty one,

Stoop down, and drink, and live."

I came to Jesus, and I drank

Of that life-giving stream;

My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,

And now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
“I am this dark world’s Light;  
Look unto me, your morn shall rise,  
And all your day be bright.”  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
In him my Star, my Sun;  
And in that Light of life I’ll walk,  
Till trav’ling days are done.

### **Bible Reading**

Phil 3: 17 – 4:1 (page 1826)

Luke 13:31-35 (page 1623)

### **Reflection**

Jesus has left the wilderness and now has begun His journey to Jerusalem. Let’s try and imagine what it must have been like to walk in His shoes...

On that very day, the Scripture says, He is warned and told to depart because Herod, whom He calls “that fox”, wants to kill Him. Foxes are clever, wily and agile. Aesop tells the following fable which aptly sums them up: *The lion called the sheep to ask her if his breath smelled. She said Aye, so he bit off her head for a fool. He called the wolf and asked him. He said No, so he tore him in pieces for a flatterer. At last, he called the fox and asked him. “Truly, the fox said, “I have got a cold and cannot smell”.* Foxes wait for opportunities to pounce on their prey. Notice in Peter Koenig’s painting that the fox is powerfully represented – large and muscular. Herod’s power in this situation is not to be underestimated. Nevertheless, Jesus is focused on going to Jerusalem and is undeterred, even knowing what fate awaits Him – that He must die.

Jesus laments over Jerusalem. Isn’t it interesting that Jesus does not present Himself here as a King or powerful Warrior. He doesn’t even send an avenging angel out to deal out justice. No, “How often”, He says, “have I longed to gather you together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.”

There is something about a mother hen looking after her chickens that touches my heart. Over the years I have had many hens raise many chickens, but recently I’ve had a standout performance from a Barred Rock cross hen. This hen went clucky or broody recently and not only is raising 5 chicks of her own, but another 5 that I hatched in an incubator. She readily accepted the latter chicks when I slipped them under her wings at night.

Mother hens are selfless and totally focused on their chicks. They will go without food in order to make sure their chicks eat. Mother hens are fiercely protective, putting their own lives in danger in order to protect their chicks. Mother hens are alert and compassionate. A research study has actually found that mother hens have the ability to feel their chicks' pain. Yes, they have empathy. Empathy was once thought to be a purely human characteristic, but it has been shown that mother hens possess the ability to be affected by, and share, the emotional state of others; and so, they feel their chicks' pain.

This is the heart of Jesus for His people.

Mother hens are strong, courageous and fearless. "Ever wondered what melts like wax for the suffering of her children and hardens like granite to protect them? — The heart of a mother." [*Rohit Dhaupta*]

This is the heart of Jesus for His people.

Charlotte Gray says that "Becoming a mother makes you the mother of all children. From now on each wounded, abandoned, frightened child is yours. You live in the suffering mothers of every race and creed and weep with them. You long to comfort all who are desolate." I'm sure, you mothers here can identify with this.

This is the heart of Jesus for His people.

And yet Jesus said the chicks were not willing to be gathered under the protection of His wings. How grievous this must have been to Him! How grievous this must still be! There are mothers who feel that they have lost their children – their children have turned away or made choices that have put them on broad roads leading to destruction. Leah Schade, a Lutheran minister, tells the story of a mother who had a daughter who had gone down the path of alcohol and drug dependency. Her tears flowed as she recounted the many times she had tried to bring her daughter back into the loving embrace of her family, away from addiction. But every time, her daughter made choices that pulled her further and further away... serving time in jail or wandering the streets. The mother, however, was ultimately able to come to the place of peace, knowing that there was nothing more she could do. She said, "No matter what happens, my daughter knows my arms are always open to her."

Jesus knew when He lamented over Jerusalem who would reject Him, and He knows now who is rejecting Him and yet His arms are always open.

This is our God. This is the heart of Jesus for His people.

Debie Thomas is the author of *The Faith of Many Rooms*. She is an Episcopalian minister who writes deeply about matters of faith and is worth looking up (see the link below). She writes about three things that strike her as she imagines our Mother Hen God. The first is the call for us to embrace **radical vulnerability**. What Jesus the mother hen offers us is not the absence of danger, but the fullness of His unguarded, open hearted, wholly vulnerable self in the face of all that threatens and scares us.

Let's think about this. What does it look like for us to be walking in Jesus' shoes, offering our own wholehearted, radical vulnerability to others? When we see others going through trials, temptations and suffering, we can share our own experiences and gently offer our comfort and support. It helps others to see and understand that they are not alone in their situation. Gently too, we can point them to the One who offers His own self to them.

We know that when we come to God it doesn't mean that we are automatically exempt from suffering. What does happen, however, is that we take comfort from knowing He walks with us, having already been there before us. There is nothing He has not gone through, for you and for me. What He gives us is His own body – his own life. He shows us how to live well with our own vulnerability: Wings spread open, and heart exposed.

The second thing Thomas notes is that we are called to **lamentation**. You are not unusual in mourning lost opportunities, broken promises or crushed hopes. We live in a very fallen world and don't have to go very far to see the evil around us. As our reading from Philippians tells us "*Many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their mind is set on earthly things. Their destiny is destruction.*" Just look at the chicks in Keonig's painting – each one is doing their own thing and is totally unaware of the fox eyeing them. It is the alert mother hen who sees the fox and who has already taken measures to protect her chicks – see the barbed blackberry in her beak.

Jesus grieves for His lost and wandering children, for the little ones who will not come home, for the city that will not welcome its Saviour. "*How often I have desired to gather you*" is His lamentation for all that **could have been** in this broken, resistant, oblivious world. In Isaiah it says, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way." We have rejected the One hope and turned our faces from Him. How then, might we stand with Jesus in the Jerusalems of our own lives?

As we walk with Him this Lenten season, let us lament over the things we have said and done that did not please the heart of God. Let us also lament over the things we have not said and done that He was calling us to do.

However, during this season, even as we are called to lamentation, as we think on our own failings, let us choose to weep our sorrow into a new hope.

And finally, Thomas tells us that we are called to **return**. The image of chicks snuggling under a mother hen's wings is an image of gathering, of community, of intentional oneness. It requires a return and a surrender. Where once we might have chosen to go it alone, spurning love because it was too risky, let us now decide to turn our hearts towards the loving home of God's mother hen heart. After all is said and done, where else can we go? The Psalmist says, "*Whom do I have in heaven, but Thee, and there is nothing on earth that I desire besides Thee.*" (Psalm 73:25)

How might you and I return this Lent? Coming back to the basics of prayer and Bible reading is a start but let it never be a burden. Jesus never wants that. Remember those breath prayers? Those prayers with no words?

The one word "HELP!" prayer? What a joy it is to put our lives into His hands and not to have to strive to earn His favour. He simply says "Come ... *Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*" (Matthew 11:28-30)

So let us walk humbly with our God this Lenten season, yielding up our own agendas and endeavouring to walk in His shoes. Let us become more radically vulnerable to God's lost chickens around us. Let us express lament for the wrongs we see and experience in the world, and let us return ourselves to His care, enabling others to return also, to trust in Him.

May you know His heart; not just for the lost and hurting of the world, but for you personally. You can run into Him and be totally safe. Amen.

Acknowledgements:

Leah Schade: [www.patheos.com/blogs/ecopreacher/2017/05/jesus-mother-hen/](http://www.patheos.com/blogs/ecopreacher/2017/05/jesus-mother-hen/)

Debie Thomas: [www.journeywithjesus.net/essays/2119-the-way-of-the-hen](http://www.journeywithjesus.net/essays/2119-the-way-of-the-hen)

**Hymn AA59: [He Came Singing Love](#)** Words by Colin Gibson

He came singing Love  
and he lived singing love;  
he died, singing love  
He arose in silence.  
For the love to go on  
we must make it our song;  
you and I be the singers.



He came singing faith  
and he lived singing faith;  
he died, singing faith.  
He arose in silence.  
For the faith to go on  
we must make it our song;  
you and I be the singers.

He came singing hope  
and he lived singing hope;  
he died, singing hope.  
He arose in silence.  
For the hope to go on  
we must make it our song;  
you and I be the singers.

He came singing peace  
and he lived singing peace;  
he died, singing peace.  
He arose in silence.  
For the peace to go on  
we must make it our song;  
you and I be the singers.

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### **Offering**

The ancients brought goats and doves to honour and bless God, but today there are many other ways we can give to God. Yes, we can give money, but we also can give our time, our devotion, acts of service, or loving words, to honour and bless Him.

**Loving God, bless these gifts, that they might bring strength to our faith, love to your world, and comfort to the forsaken. In Your Holy Name we pray. Amen**

*(Adapted from Abingdon Worship Annual 2025)*

### **Community Time**

#### **Prayers of the People**

God of Grace and God of Glory,  
You have poured Your power on Your people.  
We pray now in Your holy name,  
as generations have prayed before us,

**for the joys and concerns of our days,  
knowing that You care for the great and the small.**

We pray for creation, for the earth and all its wonders.  
We pray with joy for the changing of the seasons,  
the beauty of the leaves and cooler days.

**We pray for Your mercy on those who battle the forces of nature,  
for victims of hurricanes and earthquakes,  
for those who cannot access clean water  
or find shelter from the elements.**

We pray for the life of the nations, ours included.  
We pray for leaders and those in power,  
that they may use that power on behalf of the powerless,  
seek tolerance and compromise,  
listen for the wisdom of Your guidance,  
and exercise mutual respect.

**We pray for an end to all violence,  
that we might see our way to a different kind of future.**

We pray today for the church,  
as it gathers in many different forms,  
for Christians of every denomination and tradition,  
for the deeply committed  
and those on the brink of faith.

**We pray that in our diversity  
all might find a home that fits them,**

and that we might remember our ultimate unity in You  
a unity born of Your love,  
and work towards reconciliation,  
**towards becoming Your One church in the world,  
Your One body here on earth.**

We pray today for those who struggle today  
because of illness, or grief,  
lack of opportunity, or lack of resources,  
abuse, oppression, sickness,  
hopelessness or helplessness.

We pray that You would show us  
what spiritual gifts we might offer each one  
that we might be mutually encouraged:  
healing for the sick,  
comfort for the grieving,  
love for the lonely  
and support for the beaten-down,

food for the hungry  
and faith for the lost.

**By Your grace, soothe the suffering,  
and bring renewal in tired lives.**

We pray now for those close to our hearts:

*silence...*

We lift all these and every other prayer to you,  
**O God, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen**

*Acknowledgement: Carol Holbrook Prickett*

### **Hymn HFTC 545: [Be Thou My Vision](#)**

1. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
Naught be all else to me save that thou art.  
Thou my best thought by day and by night;  
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.
2. Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word;  
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.  
Thou my great Father, I thy dear child;  
Thou in me dwelling, with thee reconciled.
3. Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;  
Be thou my dignity, thou my delight.  
Thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tow'r;  
Raise thou me Heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
4. Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;  
Thou mine inheritance, now and always.  
Thou and thou only, first in my heart,  
High King of Heaven, my treasure thou art.
5. High King of Heaven, my victory won,  
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heav'ns Sun!  
Heart of my heart, whatever befall,  
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

### **Blessing**

There is much to be thankful for! Be strong and take heart! God is alive and at work in your heart, just as He is at work in the world. He stretches out His wings over you today, nurturing and protecting you, leading you to become more and more like Him.

Go as beloved children of God, and as beloved children of God, bring the love of God to all you encounter every day.

**Sung Amen**

*You may like to use the following prayer over the coming week. It has been adapted from Rev Billy Graham's famous Prayer for the Nation.*

**Prayer for New Zealand:**

“Our Father and Our God, we praise You for Your goodness to our nation, giving us blessings far beyond what we deserve. Yet we know all is not right with New Zealand. We deeply need a moral and spiritual renewal to help us meet the many problems we face. Convict us of sin. Help us to turn to You in repentance and faith. Set our feet on the path of Your righteousness and peace. We pray today for our nation’s leaders. Give them the wisdom to know what is right, and the courage to do it. You have said, ‘Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD.’ May this be a new era for New Zealand, as we humble ourselves and acknowledge You alone as our Saviour and Lord. This we pray in Your holy name, Amen.”