



Kaurihohore Historic Church

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Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish

Friday 18 April 2025 – Good Friday

Today's service is led by Mike Nielsen, 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.

Justice: we hope for a better world for all and work together to be part of making that happen.

Mission Statement: Sharing God's love, creating hope, working for justice.

If you, or someone you know, would appreciate a visit from one of our **Pastoral Network Team**, please speak to the service leader.

You are invited to stand if you are able for the hymns

Welcome

Candle extinguishing

Never doubt the meaning of Lent. It happened a long time ago, but it happened. Jesus walked on this earth. He practiced a ministry of radical inclusivity, drawing to himself all the despised and rejected members of society. He lived what he taught: a life of justice and love, of profound compassion for all people. He lived a life acceptable to you, O God. His death terrifies us, because it reveals how committed the world is to its own way, and the price the world exacts from those whose commitment is to you.

(Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of all the children in the world who suffer in body, in mind or in spirit.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Let us pray:

What we contemplate today is beyond words, beyond understanding. May the Holy Spirit intercede for us and give voice to what, for us, is inexpressible. Amen.

Call to Worship

Today is a day of sorrow.

We remember Jesus, a man of suffering and familiar with pain.

Today is a day of abandonment.

We hear Jesus' cry: my God, why have you forsaken me?

Today is a day of failure.

We are confronted by close friends who betray and deny each other.

Today is a day of tears.

We grieve for the death of the innocent and the violence of the world.

Today is Good Friday.

We come to God in our own need, yet with confidence that we will receive mercy and find grace to help us.

Opening Prayer

God of grace, as we gather on this solemn day, we face these last steps of Jesus' earthly journey with heavy hearts. There are other places we would rather be.

We find violence and suffering in the world around us, sometimes too close to us.

As we remember and reflect, may we draw strength from the courage, care and commitment of Jesus.

Hymn: O Christ, Your Crucifixion (Hannah C. Brown; Tune: Passion Chorale)

1. O Christ, your crucifixion
is here among us now,
creation bound and breathless
by tortures we allow.
Can wrongs meet reparation
and war-torn peoples peace,
your ravaged earth find mercy
and prisoners, release?
2. O Christ, you know our suffering,
you join our stricken cries.
When shattered hearts are silent
you speak for us with sighs.
Can your compassion change us,
your presence bring a balm
to mend us with forgiveness
as weapons pierce your palm?

3. O Christ, our tears are falling
for sorrows old and new.
You grant this consolation:
our wounds are known to you.
If we are not forsaken,
if love can stay and save,
what hope might be discovered
beyond this cross and grave?

Prayer of lament and trust

Every death brings with it a loss to mourn
and a life to celebrate.

Every shattered dream brings despair
and a hope to be renewed.

Every failure reminds us of our frailty
and the chance to create new possibilities.

Every time injustice and violence win the day,
we regroup and resolve to stand beside those who suffer.

Every time the world is shadowed in darkness,
we wait in trust for the dawn of a new day.

[Scripture Reading: Psalm 22](#)

Our Psalm this morning is Psalm 22 – the gospels of Matthew and Mark both include the opening verse of this psalm in Jesus' words from the cross.

The psalmist uses such strong language to capture the depths of human suffering and rejection, that we feel drawn into the pain. There is also an underlying trust in being vindicated and in God's purposes being fulfilled.

Today we'll listen to David Suchet reading the NIV version of Psalm 22. It's quite a long reading, so I invite you to listen and reflect on it as David reads.

Prayer

Oh dear God, we are in darker places
than we've ever known,
than we ever wanted to be.

Our usual strategies of coping
aren't working.

We are lost.

We are afraid.

We are fresh out of answers.

Oh God, light the way
for this whole heart-heavy earth,
for the helpless and hopeless,
for those drowning in grief
or fear or depression,
for the tired and harried
and the at-the-end-of-their-rope,
for those weary of their sins
and those who aren't,
and for me, too.

God, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Spirit, have mercy.

The thick of dusk has fallen
and betrayal seems
the order of the day.
The night when Love itself
was handed over
to brutal ignorance
and cunning that loves deceit.

Oh God, you chose to feel
what we feel –
to be spit on, ridiculed, tortured,
and to die all alone.

In your outstretched arms
on the cross,
are you gathering to yourself

every hideous thing,
every failure, travesty, and wrong?

Blessed are we who say:
Yes! Take this pain.
Turn things right side up again.
I can see, only now,
that you will follow me to the end
and beyond.

The day love died,
something new was born,
and may we be a people,
open to the grief, the loss,
and then, yes,
the rising of the Son.

Source: Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie (The Lives We Actually Have)

[Hymn: O Christ, Lamb of God \(An Agnus Dei\) \(Richard Bruxvoort Colligan\)](#)

O Christ, Lamb of God
Sharing our weakness, our weakness
Have mercy, have mercy

O Christ, Lamb of God
Bearing our healing, our healing
Have mercy, have mercy

O Christ, Lamb of God
Sharing our story, our story
Oh grant us, grant us Your peace
Oh grant us, grant us Your peace
Amen

Reading: My God, My God (told by Drew G. I. Hart in *God's Stories As Told By God's Children*)

[apologies, no version available online]

Reflection

My God, my God, why have you left me?

Drew Hart finishes his version of the Good Friday story with those words of Jesus. The story ends with his last breath.

We know that this isn't the end of Jesus' story – Easter and the Ascension are coming – but we can't rush there. As Christians we need to stop at the cross, in this moment of despair and suffering, we need to stop at Good Friday, even though it isn't the last word.

Theologian Jeff Chu talks about how the term “Good Friday” comes from an obsolete form of the word “good”; in Old English “guode” meant “holy”. He says: As time passes, scars fade, cultures change, and the meanings of words shift, such that it can be hard to hold onto the original reality.

Jeff then goes on to talk about how other languages are clearer about what the day actually means. The German *Karfreitag* comes from a medieval word meaning “lamentation” or “sorrow”. The Chinese for Good Friday is blunter still, literally translating as the Festival of Jesus' Suffering.

As I was preparing for today's service, I came across several interesting quotes about Good Friday.

Pete Enns says: Christianity's opening public move, so to speak, was an act of humiliation, shame, and defeat, unworthy of any of the gods.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer says: A king who dies on the Cross must be the king of a rather strange kingdom.

Wil Gafney says: Jesus was a different kind of king. Jesus didn't want to be king. King's take, but Jesus gives. A king will take your life if you get in his way, but Jesus gives life without end, life through death, life on the other side of the grave.

I have complicated feelings towards Good Friday, and I'll be honest, I'm still working out what I believe Jesus' crucifixion means. Those of you who participated in the podcast series Suanna and Kimberley led over the past month or so will have listened to the Bible for Normal People episode where Pete and Jared interview Jennifer Bashaw about atonement theories, or what did the crucifixion do.

She says there's not just one theory that can capture the kaleidoscopic picture of atonement we get in the biblical witness. There are lots of different metaphors and images, and we need to take these atonement theories, try to understand them, but realise that there is a mystery.

So I'm not standing here today with a clear atonement theory – this is what Jesus' death on the cross means.

As I read and listen to the different Gospel writers' stories about the crucifixion though, suffering is the thing that clearly stands out. Jesus' suffering in the lead up to, and on the cross. The pain he endured; the anguished cries. And the, predominantly women, disciples, suffering and sad watching him die.

I think that's a connection point between Jesus on the cross two thousand years ago and us here today commemorating Good Friday. We are surrounded by suffering, both personally and in our local communities and in the world around us.

I recently heard the Rev Emily Garcia interviewed on the 'And also with you' podcast – her topic was how to talk about Jesus on the Cross with kids. One of the things she said that stood out to me was that the Trinity means it is not Jesus suffering alone on the cross – the Father and Holy Spirit are there also. She went on to say that Jesus' death means that while we suffer, we don't suffer alone.

While we suffer, we don't suffer alone. That is so powerful.

For my birthday this year I was given a great new book to add to my collection called *The New Testament in Color*. This is an amazing commentary written by a range of scholars from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities, bringing fresh questions and perspectives to scriptures that we can become so familiar with. I'm going to share some of what Miguel Echevarría says in his commentary on the crucifixion from gospel of John. Talking about Jesus' cry of 'It is finished' on the cross, Miguel says:

Through his suffering and death, Jesus initiates the liberation of the world from the powers of sin and death. Soon the creation will be renewed, and the darkness will have no foothold on the earth. We can imagine how Jesus' final words reverberated throughout the cosmos, announcing the arrival of freedom and restoration. Soon God's Spirit will overwhelm the darkness, empowering his

people to practice a heartfelt love for God and neighbour, exactly as the Old Testament prophets anticipated. Among other things, this means that racism will be replaced by acceptance, xenophobia will be substituted by hospitality, and abuse will be supplanted by genuine care.

No one will be called a stranger or outsider in the restored cosmos because all will be at home with their God. Jesus' final words certainly speak more than we can imagine – but no less than what we have mentioned.

Kim and I attended the Maranga Mai Awaken Conference in Auckland a few weekends ago – during her talk, one of the keynote speakers, Brit Barron, said: What if Jesus didn't suffer for us on the cross, but suffered with us. I know what you are going through, and I am going to go through that with you.

Brad Jersak, in his book *A More Christlike God* talks about Jesus consenting to co-suffer with us in solidarity, and that because our sin and suffering persist, so too, the cruciform love of Christ persists.

I know I said earlier that I didn't have a clear atonement theory, but I have to believe that Jesus' suffering on the cross was at least in part to bring about a new kingdom of liberation and justice. That on the cross Jesus is suffering alongside all of those suffering in the world, both then and now.

To circle back to that Wil Gafney quote from earlier: Jesus is a different type of king. And as followers of that king, we are called to be those who partner with him to share God's love, bring hope, and work for justice for those suffering in our community and beyond.

Let us pray.

Prayer

God of the long night,

Thank you for being a God not just of solidarity but of deep and raw emotion. A God who did not endure violence in silence but who spoke and cried as your body was broken on the cross. Help us to understand that our memory of you becomes more whole when we remember you alongside the injustices with which you suffered in solidarity: the

hunger, the abuse, the loneliness of the world. Today let us grieve the path of the cross – illness, violence, alienation, the degradation of land, and all pain unspoken. Let us weep and rest. Reveal yourself to us, remind us of a God who knows the weight of oppression, and help us believe that truly you are with us. That your cause is our cause – no less than justice and liberation in life and death. Amen.

Source: Cole Arthur Riley (Black Liturgies)

Hymn: We do not hope to ease our minds (AA 147; [Tune: Before the throne of God above](#))

1. We do not hope to ease our minds
by simple answers, shifted blame,
while Christ is homeless, hungry, poor,
and we are rich who bear his name.
As long as justice is a dream
and human dignity denied,
we stand with Christ; disturb us still
till every need is satisfied.
2. We cannot ask to live at peace
in comfort and security
while Christ is tried in Pilate's hall
and drags his cross to Calvary.
As long as hatred stifles truth
and freedom is betrayed by fear,
we stand with Christ; give us no peace
till his peace reigns in triumph here.
3. We will not pray to be preserved
from any depth of agony
while Christ's despairing cry rings out:
God, why have you abandoned me?
As long as we have hope to share
of life renewed beyond the pain,
we stand with Christ all through the night
till Easter morning dawns again.

Prayers of the people

On this Good Friday, we hear again the story of Jesus' arrest, trial and death two thousand years ago. Yet what took place then is still the reality of life for people today.

For those denied or betrayed by friends or family...
in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those carrying a heavy cross...
in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those facing trial and judgement...
in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those torn between conscience and expediency...
in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those experiencing pain and abuse...
in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For friends who offer support at a cost to themselves...
in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who mourn the loss of loved ones...
in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Amen.

Blessing

Today is Good Friday, and we have gathered around the cross to remember Jesus.

Go from this place in hope and faith, for the story of Jesus is not finished.

We go to remember and to trust in God.

The blessing of God, Earth-Maker, Pain-Bearer, and Life-Giver, goes with you.

Hymn: Stay with me, the night has come (Protest of Praise; [Tune: Cysga Di Fy Mhlentyn Tlws](#))

1. Stay with me, the night has come,
Stay with me, the night has come,
Stay with me, the night has come,
and soon it will be morning,
and soon it will be morning.

2. Pray with me, the night has come,
Pray with me, the night has come,
Pray with me, the night has come,
and soon it will be morning,
and soon it will be morning.

3. Watch with me, the night has come,
Watch with me, the night has come,
Watch with me, the night has come,
and soon it will be morning,
and soon it will be morning.

4. Weep with me, the night has come,
Weep with me, the night has come,
Weep with me, the night has come,
and soon it will be morning,
and soon it will be morning.

We leave the church in silence following the final verse of the hymn.