



Kaurihohore Historic Church

P O Box 4118, Kamo, Whangārei 0141



Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish Sunday 18 February 2024 – Lent 1

The service this morning has been prepared by Richard Smith,
one of our Lay Preachers.

Welcome to Kaurihohore Historic Church

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

Togetherness, Humility, Curiosity, Love, Inclusive, Justice, Sustainability.

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

We invite you to:

*Join in the congregational responses printed in **Bold**.*

Welcome

Good morning and welcome to worship at Kauri this morning. Last Sunday we focussed on the story of Jesus' transfiguration and heard from Andrew about this scene perhaps being on the heights of Mount Tabor near the northern border of the land of Israel. From up there you could look South down the long line of the hill country and in the far distance maybe even be able to discern Mount Zion with Jerusalem perched on top, a commanding fortress capital and site of the magnificent temple built by King Herod.

This Sunday we begin the season of Lent. There is a tradition in the Church that through Lent we journey with Jesus towards Jerusalem, following his footsteps towards the cross. We extinguish a candle each week to remind us that Jesus walks on towards his death. We pray that we might take up Christ's courage to walk with love and seek justice acknowledging that to follow the Way of Jesus involves challenging injustice as Jesus did, and requires us to be prepared to sacrifice ourselves to bring justice and healing to the world.

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

The core value we are focussing on and practising this week is curiosity. So, as we begin our metaphorical journey with Jesus, I invite you to question and explore new understandings alongside more traditional ways of thinking and practising our Lenten pilgrimage. We have asked our worship leaders during these three months, while Freddy is on long-service leave, to experiment and trial different ways of conducting our services. We are calling these “Sampler Services”. So, like when you try a box of sampler biscuits, we look forward to hearing which type you enjoy and which you consider most nourishing. But also, like the samplers children used to have to carefully practice their needle-work skills on, we hope you find opportunities and stimulus to practice praying, reflecting and meditating in a range of extending ways to stretch your worship boundaries and strengthen your skills in practising following Jesus.

Maybe you would like to try it now? Imagine you are one of the ordinary disciples huddled as close as you can reasonably get to the campfire without crowding anyone else out. It’s pretty chilly up here, even at this time of year, as the harvest is ripening. Jesus, the Master, comes down from his time on the mountain top with the three, Peter, James and John, says “Hi” as he passes, grabs his kit, squares his shoulders and with a slight sigh, starts on the track towards the South, the road that leads to Jerusalem. You get up, grab your own kit, and fall into step behind the others, whispering questions as you go. “Where are we off to now?” “Surely he’s not going to head to Jerusalem?” “That’s a hotbed of trouble” “They’ve killed prophets there before.” “Oh well, where he goes, we go, I guess.” Then Jesus begins chanting the familiar psalm and we all join in with the responses.

Call to Worship

Come people of God, come into this time of worship where we begin the shared journey with Jesus as he turns his face towards Jerusalem.

(Psalm 25:1-10 A Prayer for Guidance and Protection – Good News Translation)

1 To you, O LORD, I offer my prayer;

2 in you, my God, I trust.

Save me from the shame of defeat;

don't let my enemies gloat over me!

3 Defeat does not come to those who trust in you,

but to those who are quick to rebel against you.

4 Teach me your ways, O LORD;

make them known to me.

5 Teach me to live according to your truth,

for you are my God, who saves me.

I always trust in you.

6 Remember, O LORD, your kindness and constant love

which you have shown from long ago.

7 Forgive the sins and errors of my youth.

**In your constant love and goodness,
remember me, LORD!**

⁸ Because the LORD is righteous and good,
he teaches sinners the path they should follow.

⁹ He leads the humble in the right way
and teaches them his will.

¹⁰ **With faithfulness and love he leads
all who keep his covenant and obey his commands.**

Opening Prayer for the First Sunday in Lent

Meditation:

We have come together this morning for renewal—in worship and as a community of faith. We've greeted one another, laughed and hugged. But now the time of reflection and stillness is upon us.

It is the first Sunday in Lent—the season for journeys of the heart. Close your eyes. Be still. Listen. We are entering a holy time. The Lenten candles have been lit, but over the next six weeks the light will slowly fade into darkness. For we are retelling the story of Jesus' betrayal and suffering and death. We do this not to be morbid, but because in the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, God is revealed—in the amazing transformation of death into life, in endings transformed into beginnings, and in dead-ends that become a source for new possibilities.

This is the sacred centre of our faith—the truth made manifest in Jesus Christ—that God is in each and every one of us, quietly transforming us and the world. In his pain and suffering, Jesus speaks to every pain and loss you have endured and offers you the promise of transformation. It's an old story, but it still has the power to reveal, to heal, and to redeem. Jesus is at the heart of our faith, in the depth of our souls. He is waiting for us, inviting us to leave ordinary time and follow along with him on the journey that brought him to the Cross. Listen in silence, for Jesus is calling you.

(Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of injustice in the world.

(A candle is extinguished.)

Let us pray:

Loving God, as we journey through this holy season of Lent, give us strength and courage to make the changes that are needed in our lives and in the life of our faith community. Open our hearts and minds to your steadfast presence and help us to put our trust in you. Amen.

Hymn FFS 79: Who Will Carry The Cross With Me?

(Lyrics and Tune by Bill Bennett)

(Verse one only)

1. "Who will carry the cross with me?"
Asks the Christ, the Son of God,
"Who will carry the cross with me,
walk the way of love?"

Prayer of Centring & Renewal

Holy and loving God open our hearts and minds to your presence among us and within us. Enable us to engage with our own baptism, the time we have spent in the wildernesses of life and your call on our lives to minister in your spirit, to practise forgiveness, compassion and generosity as we seek to become your living body in this place. Be with us as we enter this journey of Lent seeking the strength to share in bearing the cross and walking the way of love.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hidden: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name. Amen

Reading – Mark 1:9-15 (New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised)
(pg. 1556 in the NIV pew bibles)

This morning's Gospel reading from the Gospel of Mark was written, we think, in the 70's of the first century around forty or so years after Jesus' crucifixion and most likely shortly after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem by the Roman Army. Mark uses this story of baptism to affirm Jesus' close relationship with God. His temptations or testing time and the beginning of his ministry follow immediately after this. If you want to practise your curiosity you may like to also look up the parallel readings in the other later gospels as you reflect on what these readings mean for you as you engage in the journey ahead.

Mark 1:9-15

The Baptism of Jesus

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

The Temptation of Jesus

¹² And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵ and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

Hymn HFTC 104: [Jesus Calls Us! - In The Tumult Of Our Life's Wild Restless Sea;](#)

Food for Thought

Who here has been baptised? Do you remember it or were you just told later when you were older? That's what happened for me, infant baptism that I was told about when I was a child. Then adult confirmation in my twenties.

Some may have been dedicated as a young child in preparation for baptism when you were older. Some may have been confirmed later to complete the process of baptism when you could make that decision for yourself. Some may not know or never have been through any formal ceremony. That's fine! We intend to be an inclusive community so whatever your circumstances I hope you can engage in this time of reflection based on our gospel reading from Mark, which includes his baptism, testing and the initiation of his ministry.

If you want to give yourself a greater challenge you may like to read the parallel passages from the later gospels and reflect on what they add to each of these issues. I have listed these parallel passages at the end of the order of service if you want to look them up.

Today, in our Food for Thought time, I am going to invite you to begin an exercise in discernment, first as an individual, and then as a member of this faith community, to remember and reflect on;

1. What does your baptism or dedication or confirmation or church engagement mean to you?
2. What have you learned and how you have grown through your times in the wildernesses of your life, including what "wild animals" and "angels" kept you company through those times and how they contributed to your growth and learning?
3. Then, from that time of testing, how do you now see your/our mission or ministry in the time ahead?

If you want to make some notes to support you in this time of reflection there are paper, pens and some knee boards here for you to use. I am aware you may only

make a brief start here and may want to continue in greater depth after the service. That's fine, we have six weeks of journeying before we reach Jerusalem.

Towards the end of the time we have this morning I will invite you to share in a small group one reflection you are willing to share with those near you.

Hymn FFS 32: God Who Sets Us On A Journey

(Lyrics by Joy Dine Tune: Hyfrydol)

1. God who sets us on a journey
to discover, dream and grow,
Lead us as you led your people
In the desert long ago;
Journey inward, journey outward,
Stir the spirit, stretch the mind,
Love for God and self and neighbour
Marks the way that Christ defined.

2. Exploration brings new insights,
Changes, choices we must face;
Give us wisdom in deciding,
Mindful always of our grace;
Should we stumble, lose our bearings,
Find it hard to know what's right,
We regain our true direction
Focused on the Jesus light.

3. End our longing for the old days,
Grant the vision that we lack –
Once we've started on this journey
There can be no turning back;
Let us travel light, discarding
Excess baggage from our past,
Cherish only what's essential,
Choosing treasure that will last.

4. When we set up camp and settle
To avoid love's risk and pain,
You disturb complacent comfort,
Pull the tent pegs up again;
Keep us travelling in the knowledge
You are always at our side;
Give us courage for the journey,
Christ our goal and Christ our guide.

Community time – Celebrations, Notices, Prayer Requests, etc

Prayer for Others

Loving God, we pray for ourselves and all those who have been baptised, whether in this church or elsewhere, and for everyone seeking a closer relationship with you. May every human being know that they are loved by the living God and are indeed made in the image of God who yearns to cradle them in her arms like a loving mother cuddles her new-born baby. Holy and loving God be with all those who face fear, sickness or loneliness, those who feel empty, despairing or hopeless, those facing the temptations of wealth, idolatry or fame.

We hold before you those who have worshiped here with us and are no longer here, those we have named and those whom we have left unnamed.

.....

Holy God, seen in and known through your creation be with all those lost in the wildernesses of this world. Those whose understandings of their faith don't mesh with their understandings of your created world, those whose yearnings for peace and security bring heap violence and want on others, those whose isolation and fear drive them to manipulate and dominate others. We especially pray for those caught up in the violence of contested occupation of ancestral lands, in our own country, in Palestine and Israel, in Syria, Turkey, Kurdistan and Iraq, in Sudan and Darfur, in Russia and Ukraine.

We pray for all victims, especially those who see no point in their suffering and no justice ahead of them. Be with them, and us, as we seek to discern your vision of your kingdom and heed your call to journey with you into that hopeful future.

Offering

Prayer of Dedication

We come before you Lord God bringing our hopes and fears, our gifts and ourselves, our talents and our time. Bless these as we lay them before you and guide and support us as we seek to use them in your service to transform this world into your kingdom of love. Amen.

Hymn HFTC 531: [O Jesus I Have Promised](#)

Commissioning and Blessing

Go beloved of God, into the world made for you. Go to journey with the Christ through whatever wildernesses he calls you into. Go to live out in word and action the good news of God's transforming love, and they will be with you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We go to journey with Christ Jesus, trusting him as he walks with us. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen(x3).

Additional Gospel references for you to contemplate:

The Baptism of Jesus – Matthew 3: 13 – 17, Luke 3: 21 – 22,
John 1: 29 - 34

The Temptation of Jesus – Matthew 4: 1 – 11, Luke 4: 1 – 13

The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry – Matthew 4: 12 – 17,
Luke 4: 14 - 15