



Kaurihohore Historic Church

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Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish Sunday 19 May 2024 – Pentecost

The service this morning is led by Kimberley 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.

Togetherness: we cultivate genuine opportunities to gather together in worship and fellowship.

We invite you to:

*Join in the congregational responses printed in **Bold**.
Stand if you are able, for the hymns and the offering prayer*

Welcome

Kia ora and welcome to our service this morning, our first one back in our freshly painted church! Thank you to Jane for doing such a great job organising and project managing everything.

Today is Pentecost, sometimes called the church's birthday. The day we celebrate God sending the sending of the Holy Spirit to dwell within God's people.

Call to Worship

Holy Spirit, come amongst us!

Inspire our worship, strengthen our faith.

Holy Spirit, stay with us!

Deepen our fellowship, support our sharing.

Holy Spirit, challenge our discipleship!

Encourage us to venture out, give us the compassion of Jesus.

Holy Spirit, work through us!

Touch the downhearted with hope, move the dispirited with love.

Opening Prayer

Soaring, flowing, questing, dancing,

The Holy Spirit leads us to praise.

Searching, finding, changing, challenging,

The Holy Spirit calls us to faithfulness.

Gently, calmly, simply, persistently,

The Holy Spirit invites us to reflection.

With perseverance, with encouragement, with joy, with urgency,

The Holy Spirit moves us to action. Come, Holy Spirit, and be with us, now and always! Amen.

Hymn – [This is the Day](#) (HFTC S.28)

1. This is the day, this is the day
that the Lord has made,
that the Lord has made;
we will rejoice, we will rejoice
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.
This is the day that the Lord has
made;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day
that the Lord has made.

2. This is the day, this is the day
when he rose again,
when he rose again;
we will rejoice, we will rejoice
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.
This is the day when he rose again;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day
when he rose again.

3. This is the day, this is the day
when the Spirit came,
when the Spirit came;
we will rejoice, we will rejoice
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.
This is the day when the Spirit came;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day
when the Spirit came.

Prayer of Confession/Questioning

“A sound like the rush of a violent wind...”

Do we doubt the power of God’s Spirit to move us and our faith community for good?

“Divided tongues as of fire...”

Could the power of God’s Spirit set us on fire with enthusiasm for worship and for work, in our church and in our neighbourhood?

“And how is it that we hear...in our own native language...”

Have we realized that the Word of God has universal truth, universal potential to empower the rejected and downtrodden?

Peter quotes the prophet Joel: “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh...”

Are there no limits to the loving influence of God? Is it possible that saint and sinner, rich and poor, can all be touched and changed by God?

Time of reflection...

Words of Assurance

Living God, your Spirit will radically change us.

Into our apathy, your Spirit breathes enthusiasm; within our uncertainty, your Spirit forms faith; into our hardness of heart, your Spirit breathes compassion.

Know the peaceful power of the Spirit around you, the pardoning power of the Spirit for you, the graceful power of the Spirit setting you free.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Hymn: O Holy Spirit, Power of the Weak (*Protests of Praise*)

1. O Holy Spirit,
power of the weak,
courage of the meek,
guide for those who seek:
we worship you.

2. O Holy Spirit,
joy for those who weep,
shepherd of your sheep,
guard who will not sleep:
we worship you.

3. O Holy Spirit,
solace in our pain,
vision of God's reign,
hope none can contain:
we worship you.

4. O Holy Spirit,
voice of our true call,
help for those who fall,
love between us all:
we worship you.

Touched by the Spirit: *Susanna Wesley*

The worship team were thinking that, during Pentecost, we would share short stories about people in the wider Christian family, past or present, and the way the Holy Spirit has worked in their lives. Given that today is Wesley Sunday, I thought that I would begin this week with a by talking about Susanna Wesley, the woman who is also known as the “Mother of Methodism”. This is usually because two of her sons were John and Charles Wesley, however, the Methodist Church in Britain believes that as a writer, theologian and teacher, she deserves recognition in her own right.

I want to acknowledge that most of my information about Susanna came from Wikipedia, as well as the books: *Renew your Wesleyan DNA*; *God Seekers*; and *10 Girls who Made a Difference*.

Susanna was born 20 January 1699 in London, England. She was the youngest of 25 children born to her father, Samuel Annesley. Susanna’s father was a prominent puritan and nonconformist pastor, but when she was 12, Susanna told him she no longer wanted to attend his church, and instead began attending the Church of England. To his credit, it appears that Samuel was happy to let her do this. Susanna was intelligent and well educated – she spoke English, Latin, Greek and French, and knew the writings of the early church Fathers.

When she was 19, Susanna married Samuel Wesley, a clergyman of the church of England. Together, they had 19 children in 21 years. Nine of their children died as infants, and four of those who died were twins. Another of her children died after being accidentally smothered by a maid.

It seems to me that Susanna had a difficult life – Samuel separated from her for over a year because she refused to say “Amen” after he prayed for king William III. It was only after the King died that he moved back home again. Samuel also went to jail twice due to his poor financial abilities, and lack of money was a continual struggle for the family. Their family home burned down twice. In one of these fires her son John was trapped in an upstairs room and was rescued just in time from a 2nd storey window. After the second fire, Susanna was forced to place her children into different homes for almost 2

years while their home was rebuilt. It is said that she was mortified that the children began to use improper speech and that they played more than studied during this time away from home.

Susanna homeschooled all of her children. Her rule was that they had no lessons until their fifth birthday. From then on, they had 6 hours of class a day, and on their first day of schooling they were expected to learn the entire alphabet. Only two of her children didn't manage to do this, and the two that didn't she deemed "very backward". Despite this, Susanna was progressive for her time, giving good educations to her sons and daughters alike. They all learnt Latin and Greek, and were tutored in classical studies that were traditional in England at the time. It is said they had lively discussions on politics and religion around the dinner table.

At one stage, Susanna's husband was away in London a lot defending a friend being tried for heresy. A locum was appointed to come and preach while he was away, but his sermons revolved solely around repaying debt. Susanna was worried about the lack of diverse spiritual teaching and began to hold family services with her children on Sunday afternoons. They would sing a Psalm, then she would read them a sermon from either her husband or her father's sermon file, followed by another Psalm. Word got out about these services and local people began to ask if they could come along too. At one point, there were over 200 people attending her Sunday afternoon services, while the morning service led by the locum dwindled down to almost nothing.

Susanna remained influential in the lives of her children. As you probably know, her son John became a famous preacher and one of the founders of the Methodist church. Sometimes he would be late for a service he was supposed to be speaking at and one time he arrived late to find a lay person preaching to the crowd while they waited. John got mad about this, believing that only clergy should be able to preach. Susanna told John to, I'm paraphrasing here, pull his head in and listen to what the man was actually saying. John listened to his mum and realised the man was doing a great job, and ended up changing his mind on having lay people speak.

I see the Holy Spirit at work in Susanna's life in the way that she served her community; used her gifts and talents in the best way she could in the situations she was in; and modelled her faith to her children, continuing her role of spiritual mentor to them into adulthood.

Reading: Acts 2:1-21

Hymn – Send Us Your Spirit

(Words by Jan Chamberlain; [Tune: Great is Your Faithfulness](#))

1. Send us your spirit, Lord, just like a bushfire:

burn all our hatred; destroy all our greed.

Separate us from our secular comfort:

focus our minds on a world full of need.

Send us your spirit, Lord, your fiery spirit, Lord:

brand us your own and inspire us again.

Send us your spirit, Lord, your loving spirit:

revive our faith and inspire us again.

2. Send us your spirit, Lord, just like a rainstorm:

drum it insistently into our soul.

Drench us with showers of grace, love and blessing:

forgive our failings, Lord, and make us whole.

Send us your spirit, Lord, your cleansing spirit, Lord:

wash us, baptise us, inspire us again.

Send us your spirit, Lord, your loving spirit:

revive our faith and inspire us again.

3. Send us your spirit, Lord, just like a whirlwind,
sweeping away all our envy and pride.

Replace our trivial, petty endeavours
with a true faith in our mentor and guide,

Send us your spirit, Lord, your steadfast spirit, Lord:

blow away fear and inspire us again.

Send us your spirit, Lord, your loving spirit:

revive our faith and inspire us again.

4. Send us your spirit, Lord, all our tomorrows:
grant us your grace and your love to receive.
All of your trinity, undeserved blessings:
boldly we ask for them, for we believe.
Send us your spirit, Lord, your Holy Spirit, Lord,
all of our lives, Lord, inspire us again.
Send us your spirit, Lord, your loving spirit:
revive our faith and inspire us again.

Sermon

Last Sunday I talked about how our church is actively choosing a season of waiting once Freddy leaves us at the beginning of next year. I talked about deliberately seeking the Holy Spirit during this time to make sure that we as a church are moving in a direction that God is calling us to. I also talked about ensuring that we continue to be a beacon of love, truth, and justice while we wait.

Our reading for today carries on almost immediately from the ascension last week. There's a brief bit between them where the disciples draw lots to determine who will replace Judas, in the end choosing Matthias.

But I thought today we'd talk about what Acts 2 teaches us about how we might know that we are being led by the spirit during this season of waiting.

As you heard in Mike's reading of Acts 2, Jesus' followers are all together on the day of Pentecost. There's a sound like a strong wind, followed by what seems to be flames appearing above everyone's heads. They are filled with the Holy Spirit and begin to speak in languages that they have not spoken before, and nearby native speakers can understand.

According to Acts 2, the activity of the Holy Spirit can be a sensory experience – Jesus' followers **hear** a sound like a strong wind, they **see** what appear to be flames, other people **hear** the good news of Jesus being proclaimed in their own languages. We need to remain

alert, keeping our eyes and ears open to the work of the spirit here in our own lives, but also in the lives of our church and community. I find it heartening that the descriptions of the presence of the Holy Spirit given in our reading today are describing things that are really hard to miss – the roar of a storm, but without the rain or feeling of the wind that accompanies it; the appearance of flames in an unexpected place; hearing someone speaking the language of your home, while you are living elsewhere. When the Holy Spirit reveals themselves, we will notice.

In his retelling of the Pentecost story, Luke tells us that people are surprised, amazed, and bewildered. While it is characteristic of Luke's writing to emphasize the amazement of the crowd, he does so in this passage by using 3 different verbs for surprise – the first covers not only surprise, but also fear and consternation; the second covers feeling astonished or astounded; and the third is the word for 'marvel' and shows their continuing astonishment.

We already talked last week about how God has a history of not acting in the way we might hope, and the reading today reinforces that God can act in unexpected ways through the spirit. It is interesting to note that the work of the spirit can initially bring fear or worry, probably a normal response when hearing a violent wind, or seeing flames above your mate's head! From the experiences of Jesus' followers at Pentecost we see that this is a feeling that does not last, and continues to evolve into astonishment and amazement as time passes.

Whatever the spirit calls our church to next may feel scary initially, but that feeling in and of itself does not mean that it is not of God, and, if it is of God, we can trust the feeling will develop and change as time goes on. Which leads me to my next point:

When determining the work of the spirit it is ok to ask questions. In verse 12, Luke tells us, "Some asked each other, 'what does this mean?'"

As the we invite the Holy Spirit to help us figure out what to do next, there will be times when some, or all of us, don't understand what is going on, or where we are heading. In these times, asking questions is not just allowed, it's encouraged! We need to make sure that we provide a safe space for asking questions and seeking further understanding, recognising that some people may take more time than others to discern what the spirit is saying to us, and to feel comfortable with it.

The other key message I think we can take from today's reading is that no one is excluded. When Jesus made his initial appearances after the resurrection – first, to the women at the tomb; then to the two men on the road to Emmaus, then to the disciples minus Thomas, etc. – there was always someone missing. This time around, all the disciples are there, no one is missing out on this experience. I counted 15 other places also mentioned by Luke in our reading today – he really wants to make it clear here that this event was experienced by people from all over the known world, many of whom then became Jesus followers.

Whatever God is calling us to, I am certain that it is something everyone is invited to, anyone who walks through our doors will be welcome and included – whether their beliefs match our own or not. This is already something our church does well – there's the decision in the 1980's to be inclusive of the LBGT+ community in both congregation and clergy; the way we have a rotation of preachers each with slightly different theologies and experiences to share.

From personal experience, the way that our family has been welcomed and accepted right from our first visit here has made us all feel right at home. I remember one of our first times coming along, Hamish was about 2 and not coping with sitting quietly in the service very well, so I took him out to walk around the cemetery. After a while, Rosalie came to find me because it was time to take communion together and she wanted to make sure that Hamish and I didn't miss out. It was a small gesture, but it meant a whole lot.

We also see in Luke's quoting of the prophet Joel, "I will pour out my spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young people will see visions. Your elders will dream dreams. Even upon my servant, men and women, I will pour out my spirit in those days and they will prophesy." Luke believes that Pentecost brings about a new era in which God's spirit is shared by all – men, women; young and old. Let's continue to be a church that puts inclusion of all at our core.

I also see Luke's quoting of Joel as his way of saying "hey, look! Everything is going to happen just the way we were told it would!" The last way we can check whether what we feel called to is from God is to check, is this thing we're feeling called to do in keeping with what we know to be true about God? are we valuing what God values? Are we acting in a way that we see modelled in the life of Jesus? Is love at the centre of what we are doing?

This next season for our church might feel a little uncertain and scary, but we know that the Holy Spirit will lead us individually and collectively during this time. We will feel surprised, amazed and bewildered – sometimes all at the same time! We'll ask a lot of questions, and do our best to ensure that no one is excluded; We'll keep our eyes and ears open for signs of God's Spirit; we'll continue to check the prompting we are feeling against what we know to be true of God and living a life of faith; and finally, we will be able to look back at the end and, with hindsight, see the way that we have been faithfully led by the spirit the whole time.

Hymn – [Spirit of the Living God, Fall Afresh On Me/Us](#)

(HFTC S.23 & S.24)

1. Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me,
Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.
Break me, melt me, mould me, fill me.
Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

2. Spirit of the Living God, move among us all;
Make us one in heart and mind, make us one in love:
Humble, caring, selfless, sharing –
Spirit of the living God, fill our lives with love!

Offering Dedication

With these gifts, the Holy Spirit will go to work

Bringing companionship to the lonely, bringing hope to the despairing, bringing fun to our young people, bringing inspiration to the downhearted, bringing the way of Jesus to the faith community.

You will go to work with the Spirit.

We will, thanks be to God. Amen

Prayer of Intercession

Loving God,
We ask for the gift of your Holy Spirit
to help us pray as we ought.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

We ask for the energy and vision of your Spirit
for those who are tiring in the battle against injustice and oppression:
for those exhausted by the struggle with poverty and hunger.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

We ask for the hope and comfort of your Spirit
for those whose lives are overshadowed by illness or pain;
for those whose lives are darkened by sorrow or bereavement.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

We ask for the peace and joy of your Spirit
for those living in the shadow of war and violence;
for those eaten up by guilt and anxiety
and whose Christian life has become hard and dry.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

We ask for the guidance and strength of your Spirit
for those uncertain how to use their time, talents and gifts;
for those tempted to do what is wrong.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

We ask for the love and courage of your Spirit
for those reaching out to comfort the distressed;
for those reaching out to others with the Good News of Christ.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

Loving God,

We ask for the assurance of your Spirit
to know your presence with us in our daily lives:

in our relationships;
in our work and service;
in our worship;
in our times of joy and pain.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

In Jesus' name: **AMEN**

Hymn – [Breathe on me Breath of God](#) (HFTC 226)

1. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that as you love, so I may love,
and do what you would do.

2. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until my will is one with yours,
to do and to endure.

3. Breathe on me, Breath of God
Fulfil my heart's desire,
Until this earthly part of me
Glow with your heavenly fire.

4. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
so shall I never die,
but live with you the perfect life
for all eternity.

Blessing

In our moments of chaos...

God is with us.

In our moments of calm...

God is with us.

In our moments of life.

God is with us. Alleluia!

**We go as a Pentecost people,
touched by fire,
stirred by wind,
to mend the world.**

Alleluia!

Sung Amen x3