



# Kaurihohore Historic Church

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## Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish

### Sunday 2 February – Epiphany 4

The service this morning has been prepared by Richard Smith,  
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.***

**Love:** we are committed to selfless love to all, including those marginalised by society and the wider church.

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#### **Welcome**

Kia ora e te whanau, greetings to you, faith family, welcome to worship at Kauri this morning, the fourth Sunday in the season of Epiphany. In this season we remember the star leading the Magi or Wise Men, representing the gentiles, the non-Jews, like us, to Christ. Epiphany also means a moment of sudden and great revelation or realisation. A flash of new understanding. That's what I hope will come to you as we share this service together. This week we look forward to Waitangi Day on Thursday as we continue this season of Epiphany between Christmas and Lent/ Easter. It's a slice of ordinary time to rebuild our spiritual fitness after the celebration and feasting of Christmas, a bit like a gym fitness class to get us back in shape before facing the rigours of the pilgrimage to the cross, or the new school year. So, strip off your spiritual street clothes and let's begin our warm-up routine. Let us worship together.

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

## **Call to Worship**

*(Based on Psalm 71:1-6; A Prayer for Lifelong Protection and Help)*

<sup>1</sup> In you, O Lord, I take refuge;

**let me never be put to shame.**

<sup>2</sup> In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me;

**incline your ear to me and save me.**

<sup>3</sup> Be to me a rock of refuge,

a strong fortress, to save me,

**for you are my rock and my fortress.**

<sup>4</sup> Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,

**from the grasp of the unjust and cruel.**

<sup>5</sup> For you, O Lord, are my hope,

**my trust, O Lord, from my youth.**

<sup>6</sup> Upon you I have leaned from my birth;

**it was you who took me from my mother's womb.**

**My praise is continually of you.**

## **Opening Prayer** *(from Abingdon Worship Annual 2025)*

God of love and life, speak to our hearts this day.

Speak words of wisdom and faith.

**Open our hearts and minds to perceive your message of love,  
even when it is hard to hear.**

Strengthen our faith to answer your call,

even when we don't feel confident or capable.

**Be our wisdom, our strength, and our love,**

**that we may bring your wisdom, strength, and love to the world. Amen**

## **Hymn FFS 6: Blow Through the Valleys**

*(Lyrics: Bill Bennett, Arr: David Dell, Tune: Ruahine)*

*Chorus:*

*Blow through the valleys and sing in the rimu;*

*O Spirit of God fill the earth:*

*guide us to truth that you give in your power,*

*O Spirit of God our new birth.*

1: The world sets its heart on the value of money,  
and thinks it can buy all the treasures we need;  
but God measures worth by a new kind of poverty,  
founded on Jesus, the servant we heed. ...

*Blow through...*

2: Let mercy enfold us and justice be real,  
our races in partnership live in this land.  
The God of the whenua binds us together  
by leading us on to hold each other's hand.

*Blow through...*

3: O Spirit of God take our love, take our aroha,  
stir us to faith and to courage for you;  
that Jesus the prophet will guide us in leadership,  
bringing the Spirit of hope to renew.

*Blow through...*

### **Prayer for Centring and Renewal**

Holy and loving God, we are baptised and dedicated to you, called to grow into people in whom your character is expressed into this world. So often we feel inadequate for such a great task. Forgive us for all our self-doubt and mistrust in your knowing what we are capable of better than we do ourselves. Breathe your Holy Spirit into the depths of our beings so we may truly love with your love and live with your life in this world, that all may know the joy of your liberating presence in their lives. Inspire, strengthen and guide us as we seek to become the body of your anointing, the Christ, in this community. **Amen.**

### **Readings**

#### **Called for Justice and Love**

As we hear Jeremiah's call to build and plant and Paul urging the church in Corinth to embody love, we reflect on how God calls us today to pursue justice, build community, and express love in ways that heal and transform.

**Jeremiah 1:4-10** *New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised. (pg. 1170-71)*

This passage recounts the story of Jeremiah's call to prophetic ministry. It focuses on God's promised presence with Jeremiah as he steps into this role.

## Jeremiah's Call and Commission

<sup>4</sup> Now the word of the Lord came to me saying,

<sup>5</sup> 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.'

<sup>6</sup> Then I said, 'Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.' <sup>7</sup> But the Lord said to me,

'Do not say, "I am only a boy"; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you.

<sup>8</sup> Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.'

<sup>9</sup> Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me,

'Now I have put my words in your mouth.

<sup>10</sup> See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.'

## 1 Corinthians 13 *New International Version – UK. (pg. 1785)*

This well-known and loved passage is St Paul's reflection on the qualities of love. Love is patient, love is kind, and the greatest quality of all is love.

**13** If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup> It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup> Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

<sup>8</sup> Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup> For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup> but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. <sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. <sup>12</sup> For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. <sup>13</sup> And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

**Luke 4:21-30 New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised.** (pg. 1599)

Having read from the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue, Jesus connects his own work with proclaiming ‘the year of the Lord’s favour’, Jubilee. This creates conflict between him and some of those who hear him.

<sup>21</sup> Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’ <sup>22</sup> All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, ‘Is not this Joseph’s son?’ <sup>23</sup> He said to them, ‘Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, “Doctor, cure yourself!”

And you will say, “Do here also in your home town the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.”’ <sup>24</sup> And he said, ‘Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s home town.

<sup>25</sup> But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up for three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; <sup>26</sup> yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. <sup>27</sup> There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.’ <sup>28</sup> When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. <sup>29</sup> They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. <sup>30</sup> But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

**Hymn HFTC 474: [Holy Spirit, Gracious Guest,](#)**

## **Food For Thought:**

I have been enjoying our services through this season of Epiphany, have you? Kimberley, in the first service of Epiphany, with the theme of, “Chosen-ness”, reminded us of our baptism, “Let us remember our baptism and give thanks to God, who meets us in water and in community.” In reflecting on the passage from Isaiah she commented, “This passage is also a reminder that God cares about and values all people, even those who are commonly overlooked in our societies: minorities; those who are overworked and underpaid; people with disabilities; indigenous peoples who grieve the loss of land, language and culture; those who have fallen through cracks in systems they hoped would help them, only to be left feeling defeated and forgotten. It is encouragement for us all that even though Waters, rivers and fire happen – God does not promise freedom from the woes of the world. God’s promise is not release from suffering and pain, but accompaniment through the water, through the rivers, and through the fire. Fires, waters, river – these never have the last word.” She went on to remind us that Jesus identified himself with the whole community and so should we, “Even if we are not personally responsible for committing a particular sin, we still atone as a community.”

Then on the next Sunday Rosalie commented, “We live in a society in which it is all too easy to take pride in personal gifts, and all too easy to envy the gifts of others – because the world we live in believes that gifts are gifts to an individual.” Because we are so immersed in this individualistic way of thinking it is hard for us to hear and understand what Paul is saying, “Our gifts are not given to us individually, for our own advancement, or for personal success. Our gifts are given to the community. As an individual, we are only the vessels for these gifts, nothing more.”

“Any pride we take in our gifts is not acceptable, because it assumes that we have earned our gifts, when in truth they are given from God.” “So come, bringing the gifts that you are and the gifts that were given to you at your baptism. Bring them into community, and let God use them for God’s purposes.” “We are the body of Christ – His Spirit is with us – and with it comes all the giftedness and all the belonging and all the identity we could ever hope for.”

Then last week Mike challenged us all to relearn the art of storytelling to become relevant in the twenty-first century. He said, “I wonder if we’ve somewhat lost the art of storytelling as Christianity has ebbed and flowed over the centuries, particularly as Christianity became a tool of various Empires, whether Roman or more modern. But I think it’s a crucial art for us to relearn as we reimagine Christianity in the 21st century.”

He quoted Dorothy Butler-Bass as she reminds us, “Epiphanies ask something of us. The star is an invitation, a calling to do something — to act.” As Mike said, “One way for us to act, like Diana Butler Bass says, is to tell and show the story of Jesus, the good news, in a modern context. If we are bringers of light, one way we can do this is by telling stories. Stories of love, stories of justice, stories of hope.”

I could easily go on quoting from these excellent preachers and the wisdom they have been sharing with us, but let’s turn now to today’s readings. It is very easy for us to read scripture like we would a twenty-first century newspaper or newsfeed, as stories reporting what happened. When we read scriptures like that, we are likely to misread what is said, to hear them only as a report of happenings a couple of thousand years ago or so and to miss the real meaning and understanding they have to offer. The scripture writers were not modern-day reporters, they were story tellers. They carefully crafted what they chose to write, and how they chose to write it, to carry the message they had to share to the audience they were sending their message to. If we are to hear that message correctly, we need to hear it through their figurative use of language and the metaphors of their time. One example is the author of the book of Jeremiah picturing the Lord touching Jeremiah’s mouth, “Now I have put my words in your mouth.” But because these were the Lord’s words those Jews hearing this story immediately interpret it as a message that they are required to hear as applying through the ages not just in the time of Jeremiah.

Similarly, when we come to today’s gospel story, we need to hear it through Jewish ears of the first century if we are to understand what it is saying to us in the twenty-first century. Let’s listen again to the reading that Mike shared with us last week because that helps us make sense of the next section which we read this morning.

### **Luke 4:16–21**

16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read,  
17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed,<sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

20 And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down.

Now to Jewish readers or hearers that immediately translates as Jesus pronouncing, He is the Messiah, come to announce the year of Jubilee. And that is exactly the message the writer of Luke is proclaiming in his gospel. In today's reading Luke elaborates further Jesus' unacceptable message that God's favour was given to those his hearers regarded as outcasts, the Unchosen. God sent Elijah, not to a Jewish widow but to a Lebanese! God enabled Elisha to cleanse, not a Jewish army commander, but a Syrian. If you said that in Israel today, you'd probably get shot on the spot. Just as well they didn't have firearms in the first century. It took them a bit longer to get rid of Jesus, so we get to hear a bit more of the story.

As John proclaimed, "God is Love" so when we are baptised, we are invited to grow into a channel through which that God-Love is delivered into this world. When we come to worship, we are here to be inspired and to be reminded of our call to be lovers. We are here to build up our fitness to love, not just those we see as loveable or acceptable but those most unlovely and unacceptable, the unchosen, for they are also children of our heavenly Father, brothers and sisters in Christ with us. Love "always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." I have met and known some people who are not very nice. I imagine you have too. I need to keep coming to hear inspiring sermons and to participate in moving services if I am to be spiritually fit enough to genuinely love some of the people in this world; to forgive what I see as their heinous sins, to be compassionate to those I see as unworthy, to work at making this world a better place for all to live in as long as I live.

However, it is not just me doing the loving. I also need to be open and honest enough to see myself where I may have fallen short of the standards I expect of others. Remember it was not the Jewish man but the hated and reviled foreigner who was the good Samaritan. I have to be willing, fit enough, to reflect on when I am the one in need of forgiveness and compassion, of being loved.

Have you ever thought of what environmental destruction or what forced underpaid labour may have enabled us to have the cheap electronics we use every day, or the cheap clothes we get for a bargain, the palm oil in those biscuits or chocolate? What price have others paid for our convenience and our gain? These thoughts raise themselves up accusingly as I pray, "Father forgive us our sins."

Then this week as I look at the calendar, Waitangi Day confronts me with what I see as a major injustice we can ill afford to ignore. I am unsure if the land I live on or the land where we worship was fairly transferred from the ownership of the local hapu, Ngati Kahu o Torongare. How can I love myself, or claim to love my neighbour, if I ignore an injustice which I benefit from every day.



So, this week, we commemorate a covenant that may place us alongside some we would see as unchosen exploiters. This is one of those community sins we must hope and pray for the strength to address and resolve. Let us take this week to listen to the protests and comments, gain understanding of alternative views, and engage in conversation so that we may better discern the way forward for our community.

“Love is patient, love is kind.” We are called to face ourselves and the world, prepared to love with no limits and to accept that we too are loved regardless of our undeserved-ness. Let us remember that in all our struggles God loves us, accepts us as we are, and will walk with us through the waters, the river and the fire. We are called to be open to allowing God to enable us to see ourselves as God sees us and having seen, to act as Jeremaih did, as Jesus did, to live out that love in all the complexities of this life. That’s the promise my parents made on my behalf when I was baptised as a child, and the promise I dedicated myself to as an adult at my confirmation. That’s the invitation of every Epiphany.

## **Community Time: Notices, Joys, & Concerns**

### **Prayers of the People**

Holy and loving God, we give you thanks for the chance we have to share in this service of worship, for all the gifts you have given us, and the opportunities we have had to live fulfilling lives and to influence others for the good. You call us to love one another as you have loved us. We thank you for all your love shown to us by those who have obeyed your command and have loved us as individuals and as a community.

We celebrate the joys of our lives this week. ....

We thank you that we live in this country where people have given to the common good, so we have hospitals and health care, schools and education, roads, railways, water supply, sewerage and drains, and all those community services we so easily take for granted.

We pray for all who do not enjoy the privileges we have, for those with failing eyesight or hearing, for those with poor health, for the poor and deprived, the homeless and imprisoned. We pray for those who feel rejected, discriminated against and deprived of their rightful opportunities. We pray for all those immersed in injustice, those who have been denied land and culture, identity, and freedom to be who they really are. We pray for those surrounded by violence, fear and insecurity.

We pray for those released from imprisonment, for those faced with rebuilding shattered lives and homes, for those living with grief and losses that will never be replaced. We pray for those we have mentioned ..... and those unmentioned, be with them, and where we can be agents of your love guide and direct us. God of love teach and inspire us with your Holy Spirit, touch our lives with your presence, so we may live here as your body, transforming this world into your heaven. **Amen.**

**Hymn AA 155: Where Mountains Rise to Open Skies**

*(Lyrics: Shirley Murray, Tune: Vernon Griffiths)*

1. Where mountains rise to open skies  
your name, O God, is echoed far,  
from island beach to kauri's reach,  
in water's light, in lake and star.
  
2. Your people's heart, your people's part  
be in our caring for this land,  
for faith to flower, for aroha\*  
to let each other's mana\*\* stand.
  
3. From broken word, from conflict stirred,  
from lack of vision, set us free  
to see the line of your design,  
to feel creation's energy.
  
4. Your love be known, compassion shown,  
that every child have equal scope:  
in justice done, in trust begun  
shall be our heritage and hope.
  
5. Where mountains rise to open skies  
your way of peace distill the air,  
your spirit bind all humankind,  
one covenant of life to share!

\* aroha = Maori word for "all-embracing love"

\*\* mana = Maori for "dignity, prestige"

## Offering and Prayer of Dedication

**Holy Lord God we come before you; bless us, our offerings of time talents and possessions, that we may become channels through which your loving presence is known and effective throughout the world, transforming all into your kingdom. Amen.**

## Hymn FFS 14: [Faith Has Set Us On a Journey](#)

*(Lyrics: Shirley Murray, Tune: Hyfrodol)*

1. Faith has set us on a journey,  
past the landmarks that we know,  
taking risks with no insurance  
but the Word that tells us "go".  
Friend or job or home or lover  
we may have to leave behind,  
outworn truths and ways of thinking,  
baggage to the past consigned.
2. Some are swags of easy conscience  
who with others hitch a ride,  
some are tourist-package Christians,  
dollar-safe, with book and guide.  
There are others on this journey  
There are others on this journey—  
those who long and pray and search,  
heave the stones to free the structures,  
love the Christ and leave the Church.
3. We are this unlikely people  
in the Body, knit as one,  
company of clowns and cripples—  
some are wise and some can run.  
Prophets are our travel-agents,  
gospel-makers lay this road:  
to the place of peace and promise  
faith will take us into God.

## **Commissioning and Blessing**

The Lord has touched our lives and commanded us, like Jeremiah to go out to transform this world into his kingdom. Brothers and sisters in faith, let us face fear, rejection or whatever comes, together, encouraging and supporting one another, knowing that nothing can separate us from the love of God shown in the life example of Jesus.

**We go now, with his blessing, to love and serve him in this world he loves.**

## **Sung Amen**

## **Prayers for the Week Ahead**

*(with thanks to Bec Lindsay and L3 “Called for Justice and Love”)*

This week I invite you to remind yourself each morning and evening of the words of the following prayer by St Teresa of Avila:

*Christ has no body on earth but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which He looks  
Compassion on this world,  
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,  
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.  
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,  
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.  
Christ has no body now but yours,  
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,  
Yours are the eyes with which he looks  
compassion on this world.  
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

Then spend some time reflecting on what that might mean for you this day, thinking ahead each morning on how you might live this prayer, and remembering each evening those whose lives intersected with yours through the day to enable you to put the prayer into action.