



Kaurihohore Historic Church

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Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish

Sunday 2 March 2025 – Transfiguration

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.

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

*You are invited to stand if you are able, for
the hymns and the offering prayer*

Welcome

Mōrena e te whānau. Good morning church family. My name is Mike, and it is my pleasure to welcome you to worship here at Kaurihohore Church this morning.

As the season of Epiphany draws to a close and Lent is just around the corner, the Scriptures in the Lectionary turn, as they do every year, to the transfiguration of Jesus.

The transfiguration is considered by many scholars to be one of the five major milestones in the story of Jesus as told in the Gospels, alongside his baptism, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. It's a pivotal and mystical moment, which we'll get more into as the service progresses. But for now, please join me in our call to worship.

Call to Worship

We come to this holy place; transformation is possible here,
a place of awesome encounter. A place of holy insight.

New relationships become possible here,

a place of fresh encounters, a place to leave the past in the past.

A new outlook will start here,

a place of fresh vision, a place of surprise and recognition.

This faith community is open for change,

a place of healing and forgiving, a place of hope for the suffering.

Come to this holy place in prayer; you will go away inspired and changed.

Source: David Sparks (Responsive Prayers Year C)

Opening Prayer

We come into your presence with uncertainty, loving God.

We are not sure what you will require of us.

We come into your presence with awe, loving God.

Your glory is way beyond our understanding, but your compassion is closer than our hands and feet.

We come into your presence with a willingness to serve, loving God.

You give us the strength to meet the needs of our neighbour and a corner of the suffering world.

You come into our presence with joy, loving God.

All of life, all that lies in the realm of eternity, is for you, and with you, and gives you praise and thanksgiving. Amen

Source: David Sparks (Responsive Prayers Year C)

Hymn: [Love Divine, All Loves Excelling](#) (HFTC 217)

Prayer of Insight

Loving God, you call us to look afresh at the everyday and commonplace.

We will see the ordinary transformed by your Spirit.

We look at those we know well and see the sacrifices they make in their lives.

We will see the ordinary transformed by your Spirit.

We look at those who are patiently enduring a crisis.

We will see the ordinary transformed by your Spirit.

We look at people surviving the turmoil of human conflict.

We will see the ordinary transformed by your Spirit.

We look at the faith community struggling in a materialistic, secular world.

We will see the ordinary transformed by your Spirit.

Time of silent reflection

Assurance of a Renewed Vision

You come to our routine and ordinary tasks, Blessed Spirit,
and challenge us put our dreams into action.

You search out our flawed friendships and relationships, Blessed Spirit,
and challenge us to investigate the roots of our struggles.

You know our neglected talents, Blessed Spirit,
and challenge us to put them to work to support others.

You believe in our willingness to share in the efforts of our faith community, Blessed Spirit,

and challenge us to work with and for the downhearted in our neighbourhood.

Where our vision is lacking, God will encourage and renew us.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

Source: David Sparks (Responsive Prayers Year A)

Scripture Reading: Psalm 99

Hymn: [Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty](#) (HFTC 594)

Prayer of Illumination

Until we see ourselves in the words we read
and the stories we hear,
it is easy to remark on the rest of the world.

**May the light of these words fall strong upon each of us,
that we can find the truth they reveal
in our own hearts.**

Source: Gretta Vosper

Scripture readings: Exodus 34:29-35

Luke 9:28-43a

Hymn: [Much Brighter Than a Thousand Suns](#)

(Andrew Pratt; Tune: Melita)

1. Much brighter than a thousand suns,
the source of life, eternal grace;
light of the cosmos and this world
now shining from a saviour's face.
Upon the mountain's towering height
they saw transfiguration's light.
2. This man, this Jesus, they had known,
who called them once by Galilee,
now stood upon the mountaintop,
he seemed exalted, shining, free.
Disciples caught in stark surprise
had shielded dazzled, blinded eyes.

3. Free of the bonds of human life
and distanced by some greater power,
a strange yet mystic harmony
joined earth and heaven in this hour.
It seemed that God was very near,
inspiring awe, dispelling fear.

4. The height of love, the depth of grace,
the dazzling birth of something new,
a supernova magnified,
a stunning, startling, shining view,
for God affirmed Christ's human worth
illuminating all the earth.

Reflection

In the story immediately before our reading from the Gospel of Luke today, Jesus had been with his disciples and asked them some questions “Who do the crowds say that I am?” (to this the disciples say: well, there are lots of answers to that Jesus, some say John the Baptist, others Elijah the prophet, or perhaps one of the ancient prophets come back to life” and then “Who do you say that I am?” to which Peter confesses “The Messiah”, which, along with Mary Magdalene in John chapter 11 is the first instance in the gospels of someone naming Jesus the Messiah, or the Christ.

Jesus then goes on to predict his death and resurrection, and follows that by the famous saying: All who want to come after me must say no to themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow me.

Eight days after this, we see Jesus once again with his disciples, this time a smaller subset of them: Peter, John, and James. They're heading up a mountain to pray.

While throughout Christian history people have tried to work out exactly which mountain they climbed, the author of Luke isn't that interested in specifics – in their commentary on Luke, Amy Jill Levine and Ben Witherington III say the mountain is symbolic; a place closer to the divine (in the same way that pits, trenches and the abyss often symbolise a distance from heaven).

The disciples and Jesus are going up the mountain to pray.

And while Jesus is praying, something amazing happens. Luke says the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes flashed white like lightning. Something incredible is happening

In the same way that God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai, now in the transfiguration of Jesus, we have that same Sinai presence of God. That same God that Moses encountered on the mountain in Exodus is now fully revealed in Jesus. It is an extraordinary moment; a moment of illumination. The disciples have walked with Jesus all this time, but here's the moment, just after Peter has declared Jesus as Messiah, where they see him fully as he is, they see him in his full glory, in his full splendour. His face is shining like the sun, like Moses' did, his clothes are like lightning. Then out of nowhere, Moses and Elijah turn up.

As you can imagine, the disciples are in awe, terrified, trying to work out what is going on.

We were just up here on the mountain with Jesus praying, and then boom. Shining face, clothes like lightning, and two of our most renowned Jewish ancestors turn up. What is going on?!

Peter's trying to work out what to do. This is incredible. Jesus, Moses, and Elijah – all in one place. It can't get better than this – we need to stay. So he splutters out: "Master, it's good for us to be here. Let's make three dwellings. One for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah." This can't stop. We're setting up camp here; this is where we're staying from now on, on this mountaintop. It doesn't get better than this.

Theologian Wil Gafney has an interesting perspective on this. She imagines Peter is thinking, if we stay on the mountain with Jesus, then we don't have to deal with what's happening down the mountain in the rest of the world.

To put it into our context, if we stay on the mountain, then we don't have to deal with brutal warmongers and capitalist dictators trying to control and destroy people and land for their own gain.

If we stay on the mountain, we don't have to worry about kids going hungry, poverty skyrocketing, social conditions deteriorating.

If we stay on the mountain, we can turn a blind eye to the violence in our community, to grown men from a church storming a library and terrorising children and families during Hugo's Rainbow Show, a show about the weather put on during Pride month, just because the person presenting it was a drag king. And as a side note on that, I was overjoyed to see a message from Te Aroha Roundtree, President of the Methodist Church, declaring that they stand in unwavering solidarity with our LGBTQ+ whānau in response to that and other recent attacks.

If we stay on the mountain, we can stay in the perpetual holy moment with Jesus, Elijah and Moses. It sounds pretty tempting – let's set up camp, build some dwellings, ignore what's going on down there and just live for this. Who wouldn't want to stay up the mountain with them? Plus, this way perhaps what Jesus has been predicting about his death won't happen, perhaps this is a way to keep him safe. Let's just stay up on the mountain, and savour this moment forever...

You've got to admit, you'd be tempted too stay, right?

But that's not what happens in this story.

Instead, a cloud descends on them; once again, the cloud is symbolic, representing a divine presence on the mountaintop. And from this cloud comes a voice from heaven, just like earlier in Luke when Jesus was baptised. The voice of God says something pretty similar then too: "This is my Son, my beloved. Listen to him."

Then just like that, they're back to just them and Jesus. The disciples are literally awestruck, they don't know what to say; what have they just witnessed?

I imagine Jesus coming up to them, turning them around to face the path they'd recently walked up, placing his hands around their shoulders and leading them back down the mountain, back into society, back to where the hurt, pain and need is real, as the last part of today's story shows, when Jesus heals the boy and everyone is overwhelmed by God's greatness.

This is important, because perhaps Peter didn't want to go back down the mountain. I mean, when you've experienced the glory and splendour of Jesus revealed, why would you want to go back down the mountain? That's where all that self-denial and taking up the cross would have to occur. That's the tricky stuff, Jesus.

To quote Wil Gafney:

If they just stayed on the mountaintop a little while longer they might just forget there was anybody else outside their little privileged circle, hungry, hoping, desperate, dreaming, waiting for them to come down and live the gospel.

But there at the base of the mountain, Jesus went back to his work: healing the sick, liberating the oppressed, bringing good news to the poor.

Because that's what Jesus is calling us, as his followers to do, to come down the mountain, to share God's love, to create hope, to work for justice in our community, in Kaurihohore and Te Kamo, in Whangārei, and beyond.

Hymn: [God, Gives Us Eyes To See Your Reign](#)

(David Bjorlin; Tune: Kingsfold)

1. God, give us eyes to see your reign,
a slowly growing light
transfiguring our common world,
restoring faith's dim sight.
Illumine eyes in shadow's gloom
where hate and greed hold sway,
for darkness is as light to you
and you make bright our way.
2. God, give us ears to hear your voice
amid the noise of life
that speaks a word of faith and hope
and calms our inner strife.
Lord, tune our ears to hear the pain
of every child that cries,
who mourns injustice, hate, and war:
your voice in human guise.

3. God, give us hands to do your work,
to shape with love and care
the facets of your peaceful reign
for all the world to share.
Restrain our hands from wasted work
that strives for private gain,
that build up monuments of wealth
and add to human pain.

4. God, give us tongues to praise your works,
and voices to proclaim
the story of redeeming love,
the glory of your Name.
Embolden us to join the sound
of tortured cries unheard,
to call on all to hear your voice,
the justice-speaking Word.

5. God, give us eyes to see your reign
and ears to hear your voice,
strong hands to do your kingdom's work
and voices to rejoice –
that all our senses be employed
in yet unfathomed ways
till work and worship are as one
in lives of endless praise.

Offering Prayer

You take us to a holy place, O God.

Your inspired presence lifts us up and gives us new life.

You bring us down to earth, O God.

Through your eyes we see what needs to be done and we find the strength to begin.

Bless these gifts, O God,

through which the ordinary shines with your holy presence. Amen

Source: David Sparks (Responsive Prayers Year C)

Prayers of the People

As one heart is lifted

May we share its celebration

As one heart is burdened

May we share the pain it knows.

For ourselves, for those named or remembered,
and in solidarity with those
who have not the freedom to express
their concern or celebration
for fear of discrimination or condemnation.

May we find in this day
an awareness of the freedom we are given
to know life unshackled from fear,
and embrace the possibilities of the present,
with every breath we take.

Adapted from: Greta Vosper

Lord's Prayer

Please use whichever translation or language you feel most comfortable with

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever.
Amen.**

Hymn: Dare to Live the Dream God Gives You

(David Bjorlin; Tune: Hyfrydol)

1. Dare to live the dream God
gives you,
Seek out paths as yet unknown,
For the Spirit leads you onward,
And you never walk alone.

3. Journey on with true
companions,
Joining hands and sharing
bread,
For we share a common journey
And in friendship we are fed.

Refrain:

*Go in courage, walking humbly,
Bearing love none can destroy.
Doing justice, loving mercy,
Go with God, and go in joy.*

4. Dare to live the dream God
gives us,
Brave the path, and face the
fear,
For the Spirit will unite us;
Christ himself is always near.

2. When the dread of doubt assails
you,
And the road remains unclear,
Yet our faithful God will guide you
Through the doubt and dread of
fear.

Blessing

The world now is too dangerous
and too beautiful for anything but love.
May your eyes be so blessed you see God in everyone.
Your ears, so you hear the cry of the poor.
May your hands be so blessed
that everything you touch is a sacrament.
Your lips, so you speak nothing but the truth with love.
May your feet be so blessed you run
to those who need you.
And may your heart be so opened,
so set on fire, that your love,
your love, changes everything.

Source: Black Rock Prayer Book

Closing karakia:

Kia tau ki a tātou katoa

Te atawhai o tō tātou Ariki, a Ihu
Karaiti

Me te aroha o te Atua

Me te whiwhingatahitanga

Ki te wairua tapu

Ake, ake, ake

Amine

Translation

*May the grace of the Lord Jesus
Christ,*

and the love of God,

*and the fellowship of the Holy
Spirit be with you all*

Forever and ever

Amen

Transfiguration

For that one moment, 'in and out of time',
On that one mountain where all moments meet,
The daily veil that covers the sublime
In darkling glass fell dazzled at his feet.
There were no angels full of eyes and wings
Just living glory full of truth and grace.
The Love that dances at the heart of things
Shone out upon us from a human face
And to that light the light in us leaped up,
We felt it quicken somewhere deep within,
A sudden blaze of long-extinguished hope
Trembled and tingled through the tender skin.
Nor can this blackened sky, this darkened scar
Eclipse that glimpse of how things really are.

From *Sounding the Seasons* by Malcolm Guite