



Kaurihohore Historic Church

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Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish

Sunday 22 December 2024 – Advent 4

The service this morning has been prepared by Rev Freddy De Alwis

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.

Welcome

We are a people who seek to be brought together by the love of Christ. Our faith teaches us that God gives us unconditional love and forgiveness.

We acknowledge God’s free gift of prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

“Today we light the first, second, third, and fourth candles of the Advent wreath. Each candle has a meaning. The first candle is HOPE, the second candle is PEACE, the third candle is JOY, and the fourth candle is LOVE.”

The candles are lit.

“John 13:34 – Jesus said to them, I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

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

Call to Worship

Come, all who are faithful and all who seek Peace and Joy in your lives.

It is the season to sing praises to God for the Christ Child, prince of Peace!

The symbols of hope, peace, love, and joy shine brightly in our hearts.

May they remain with us throughout the new year.

We now share a promise that was fulfilled by God:

That our beloved Child is born and will call us to new lives of hope, peace, love, joy and faith in action. Amen.

Hymn WOV 228: [O Come All Ye Faithful](#)

1. O Come all ye faithful, - Joyful and Triumphant,
Come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him – Born the king of Angels:

O come, let us adore Him

O come, let us adore Him

O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

2. True God of true God, - Light of Light eternal,
Lo! He abhors not the virgin's womb,
Son of the Father, Begotten not created:

3. Sing, choirs of angels, - Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above,
Glory to God In the highest:

Community Time:

Prayer of Reconciliation and Healing:

With shame we confess our pride which hides the light of Christ at this Christmastide. We are sorry for our ignorance about your blessing of the poor and humble.

Lord, have mercy.

Forgive us for the lack of regard we have for your nature as one saves, and let us see more clearly how your saving grace was embodied in Jesus Christ.

Christ have mercy.

For our lack of response in praise through word and deed under the guidance of the Spirit, we humbly seek your forgiveness O God.

Lord, have mercy.

Declaration of Forgiveness

God forgives all those who truly repent and turn to him. Hear then Christ's word of grace, 'You are forgiven'.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

Hymn HFTC 72: [Away In A Manger](#)

1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
2. The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes,
I love Thee Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.
3. Be near me Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven, to live with Thee there.

Anonymous

Reading: Luke 1:39-56. (page 1591) *Reader: Rosalie*

Message - "Mary's Message of Liberation"

The Angel Gabriel asked Mary to become the mother of the Son of God Luke 1: 35. He said to her "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you: so, the child to be born of you will be called Holy, the Son of God".

Hearing Afresh Mary's Message:

Normally when we read or listen to Mary's *Magnificat*, we're tempted to soften its message and spiritualize its meaning. But I'd like for us to read Mary's song afresh to re-discover what Mary meant by her own words.

And Mary said:

*“My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has remembered me, his lowly servant!
His name is holy; from one generation to another,
He shows mercy to those who honour him,
He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.”*

Three important Questions, we need to find answers to.

- What sorts of things did Mary expect God to do through Her son?. In other words, what did Mary expect the long-awaited Messiah to be like?
- What did she see as the Messiah’s mission on earth? Lk 4:16ff
- What sorts of things did Mary anticipate He would accomplish?

She had a dream and a vision for her son and for her people

- She announces the promises of God to **her people**.
- She proclaims the liberative message of salvation promised by God **to her people**.
- She speaks of the deeds being realised by God. She mentions the type of impact God has on **her people**.

The Deep Significance of the Birth of Jesus Christ or Christmas to Mary and Joseph

“The arrogant of heart and mind He has brought down from their thrones. But the humble have been lifted high. The hungry He has satisfied with good things, the rich sent empty away.”

It means;

Political and economic revolution.
Breaking the monopoly of the rich.
Feeding the hungry with good things.

But the church and the Christian tradition has successfully domesticated Mary to known as the **comforter of the disturbed**, not as a disturber of the comfortable. Latin American theologians especially liberation theology sees Mary on the side of the **needy**, the **weak** and the **exploited**.

This is whole mark of the Church or Christianity...a few years back Pope Francis visited Myanmar- the Church had urged the Pope not to talk about Rohingya people and even not to say that word Rohingya....essentially taboo...That means friendship/diplomacy is important than truth and Justice.

This passage – Lk 4:16ff..

- It is the longest set of words spoken by a woman in the New Testament.
- It is also the first Christmas carol ever composed.

Character and the journey of Mary

Soon after her famous first carol of the world, the Romans required Mary to walk 90 miles while pregnant with a baby to the small rural town of Bethlehem.

She was a perfect mother- physically/spiritually strong woman with good powers of endurance and tolerance, rather than a type of gentle Madonna that we see in the **paintings of Raphael, Filippo Lippi, or Leonardo da Vinci.**

- She travelled with Joseph from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea, a distance of about 90 miles.
- **She was a tough ordinary woman of the people.** She was rejected by the well-to-do house holders of the day.
- Joseph and Mary had no choice but a cattle shed to use to give birth to Jesus Christ...she had to be with the animals. Homeless...
- We can compare Mary and Joseph with: the trials and hardships which many people in the **slums** of modern cities have to suffer every day, Homeless people, Millions of **refugees** all over the world, **Rohingya** community over 700,000, What is happening in Palestine right now? How many million refugees? Over 45,000 people were killed over 100,000 wounded, there's no end.
- **As to being a Migrant worker**, Mary along with Joseph would have experienced tribulations of by being foreign workers in Egypt. **She experienced the problems which many of the migrants are facing in the rich countries.** Called **names**...told to go **back to your country**...etc.
- Joseph and Mary experienced the **hatred**, the **jealousy** and the **venom** of the political rulers of the day. They felt the savage brutality of the soldiers of Herod. It was not a silent night..

Mary of Nazareth, while completely devoted to the **will of God**, was far from being a fearful submissive woman. She was a woman who did not hesitate to proclaim that God is on the side of the poor, the humble and the oppressed, and God will remove the privileges and positions from the powerful (Lk. 1:51-53).

These are the perfect qualities of the disciple of the Lord, faithfully she followed the will of God and always she was with Jesus, when Jesus was born, she must have said to herself, '*this is my blood and my flesh*' and at the cross, when they removed the body of Christ from Cross to her lap, she must have repeated the same words '*this is my blood and my flesh*'. That's the words we use to take part in the holy communion.

Prayers of the People

Offertory Prayer

HYMN HFTC 197: [Joy To The World](#)

1. Joy to the world- The Lord has come!
let earth receive her king,
let every heart prepare him room
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

2. Joy to the earth - The Saviour reigns!
let songs be heard on high,
while fields and streams and hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3. He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
the wonders of his love,
the wonders of his love,
the wonders, and wonders of his love.

Isaac Watts

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING *(People Stand As They Are Able)*

The Lord is here.

God's Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

With all your people in heaven and on earth we give you thanks, Holy Father, for Jesus Christ, through whom all things are made; who in the fullness of time became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth; who in obedience suffered death on the cross, and was raised in triumph that we might have life. Therefore, we worship and praise you saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest; Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

All glory and thanksgiving to you, Lord God, creator and ruler of the universe, because you gave your beloved Son Jesus Christ, who on the same night he was betrayed, took bread, and after giving thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way he took the cup after supper and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

Glory to you, our Lord Jesus Christ; Your death we show forth; Your resurrection we proclaim; Your coming we await. Amen. Come Lord Jesus.
(People may sit)

Come Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be to us the bread of life and the cup of salvation. Bind us into one body that we may grow into the fullness of Christ who is the head. **Amen.**

We come to your table, Lord, trusting not in our own righteousness but in your great mercy. We are not worthy even to gather the crumbs from under your table. But you are the same Lord, whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat this bread and drink this wine that Christ may evermore dwell in us and we in him. Amen.

The Communion

Prayer After Communion

The Grace of Christ has been offered to us again today.

We receive it with thanks, and through our kindness we will share it with others.

The Love of God has come to us again today.

We fill our hearts in joy, and through our compassion we will share it with others.

The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit has embraced us again today.

We delight in it with gratitude, and through our generosity we will share it with others.

Go in peace and thanksgiving, live and work so that God's goodness may be recognised, and God may be praised.

Amen.

(Eucharist Prayer From Food For The Road: Life Lessons From The Lord's Table © 2005 John van de Laar).

Hymn: Peacemakers

(Lyrics: Norman Brookes, Tune: M.C.W. Bell)

1. Where are they now,
the peacemakers,
whom Jesus called "the blest"?
Who risk their all,
make walls to fall,
and are of love possessed?

2. Where are they now,
when hate reigns down,
when rockets pierce the night,
when children cry,
and hell seems nigh,
and truth has fled from sight?

3. Where are you now?
Blest peacemakers,
our world has need of you.
To speak with strength,
and deep intent,
spark hope and life renew.

4. Where are you now?
Away, or here?
Peacemakers we can be!
If we, Christ's way,
live day to day,
in blessed harmony.

5. Peacemakers work,
and hope and pray
that conflicts, wars, will cease,
let arms embrace
our human race,
bring to God's world: true peace.

Benediction and Grace

Therefore, walk in the light of Christ and work for the mission of Christ. May God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit go with you.

We go to shine the light of Christ!

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us now and forever.
Amen, Amen, Amen.**