



Kaurihohore Historic Church

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Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish

Sunday 22 September 2024 – Season of Creation



The service this morning is led 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.

After the service you are invited to share in a morning tea in the kitchen or on the deck.

Community time during the service is a good opportunity to ask for prayers for yourself or others. If you, or someone you know, would appreciate a visit from one of our **Pastoral Network Team**, please speak to the service leader.

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

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

Welcome

Sentence:

How clearly the sky reveals God's glory! How plainly it shows what he has done! Ps 19:1.

Call To Worship & Prayer:

The Lord is my shepherd; I have everything I need.

Like a shepherd who leads the flock;

Jesus guides and encourages the people of God.

Like a shepherd who cares for the sheep;

Jesus is a friend to the lonely and down-hearted.

Like a shepherd who calls for the lost sheep;

Jesus calls us home and gives directions to the lost.

Seeking direction, needing nurture,

longing for relationship,

encouraged in the journey of faith,

We come together to worship God. Amen.

Hymn HFTC 260: [Great is Your Faithfulness, O God my Father](#)

Community Time:

Prayer of Confession & Healing :

Silence...

Hear the confession of your people most gracious God,

for our hearts are heavy with the knowledge of our sin.

A worldwide humanity who do not treat your creation

with respect, care or compassion-

taking for granted the resources with which our world is blessed;

Lord we ask your forgiveness.

As those who sometimes do not care for each other
in the way that you care for us;
as a humanity which chooses to live in opposition to itself,
denying basic human rights to so many,
because of a difference in skin colour, race, religion or gender.
as people whose apathy overwhelms their creativity;

Lord we ask your forgiveness.

As those who jealously guard their personal faith, not sharing it with others;
as a people who accept only those whose faith is the same sort as ours;
as those who disregard any spirituality other than our own;

Lord we ask for your forgiveness.

God waits patiently for us.....

God listens carefully to our confessions.....

God says simply to us: In Christ your sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Hymn HFTC 40: [Praise to the Lord, the Almighty](#)

Bible Readings: (*Psalm 104:10-15, 18, 20, 21*)

You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow between the hills,
giving drink to every wild animal;
the wild asses quench their thirst.
By the streams the birds of the
air have their habitation;
they sing among the branches.
From your lofty abode you water the mountains;
the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.
You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to use,
to bring forth food from the earth,
and wine to gladden the human heart,
oil to make the face shine,
and bread to strengthen the human heart. ...
The high mountains are for the wild goats;
the rocks are a refuge for the coney.
You make darkness, and it is night,
when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.
The young lions roar for their prey,
seeking their food from God

Second Reading: Matthew 21: 33-40

Sermon: “Stewardship of Creation”

As this is the season of creation, I would like to focus on “**the stewardship of creation**” - that’s a theme found in Mt 21 – the renters of the vineyard. If we take the second creation story in Genesis 2 as about living in a garden, Mt 21 is a good parable about caring for it. And also Psalm 19, and Ps 104, Isa 5:1-6. This parable was a **reminder about ownership**. We do not own the vineyard; we are trustees or stewards of it.

The earth, air, water and food we receive as a gift from God, for every human being to use wisely and sustainably, and pass it on to the next generation.

Background: Just in order to get to the subject - the word, “**The Environment**” what does it mean? It means **whatever surrounds us** or is outside us. Is it a correct understanding of the world??

But the truth is contrary to this understanding. The world/creation around us is also within. We are an expression of the creation; creation is an expression of us. We are made of it; we eat, drink, and breathe it. **Read Gen 3:19**, And someday, when the day comes, we will each return to the earth. Earth is the bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

We have to admit that no one can ever understand the “**holy mystery of creation**”, the point I want to make is that the word “environment” does not carry the real meaning of God’s creation.

1. **Anthropocentrism** = A human-centred perspective

It is a fact that so much anthropocentrism has emerged through the influence of the Bible, and so many arguments are there to justify the human-centred perspective, Gen 1 and Ps 8, just to mention few. With this (wrong) understanding of the will to dominate the earth, Gen1:26b -28, Ps 8:6, begins with an understanding that humans are radically different from everything else in creation. It assumes that there is an unbridgeable gap between humans and the rest of creation.

Is it possible to think that this kind of understanding of theology has led the Church over the years to interpret scripture to undergird such theological positions and even to interpret biblical words such as “dominion” and “subdue” to abuse God’s creation.

2. Creation is the place of God's presence

Many religious traditions, mainly Judaism and Christianity, believe and understand the indwelling of God within the whole creation.

Creation is the place of God's presence. **God is "home" here, as we are.** The Greek word earth and home is **Oikos!** The first and basic meaning of oikos is simply "Habitat Earth." Oikos – earth as a vast but single household of life - means the capacity for survival, that is, sustainable habitat. **It means space** and the means for the living of all living things. Without adequate hospitable habitat, nothing lives. Not only humans, but all life-forms need carefully fitted habitats.

The same creation story says that God saw the other creatures were good quite apart from human beings, indeed, before there were any human beings. In Psalm 50:9-12, ***For every wild animal of the forest is mine, the world and that is in it is mine....*** Actually human beings are closely related to, and even dependent on non-human creatures. The truth is non-human creatures and the whole of creation (forest) can survive without humans, but humans cannot survive without them. This point is presented beautifully in Psalm 104, especially in verses 27-30, which is a liturgical parallel to the Genesis creation story.

Jesus in the NT says that God cares for even the ravens "they neither sow nor reap" (Luke 12:24) and clothes the lilies (Luke 12:28) which invites us to see in creation the sacrament of God's hidden presence and experience all things as part of God's creation.

So God creates and **protects** the whole of God's creation and **indwells, accompanies, participates** and **delights** in them. I am convinced that similar insights can be drawn from Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Islamic scriptures.

In fact the delicate design behind the whole of God's creation convinces that nothing is accidental!

This foundational fact - that we all need a fitted space for us to live – right to live, right to migrate is the great element of "democracy" in life. And even seasonal movement of animals/birds from one region to another. **_More than two thirds of the world is crying for this space and democracy.** That is an echo of the crisis we are faced with. There is a group of people call "Rohinjiya in Myanmar" just over 700,000 women and children..... No country...

Whatever we choose to call it, the point is that all living beings, including animals **need a space, productive land, forest, a hospitable atmosphere, safe water and clean air.**

3. **When we talk about creation is the place of God, I am not talking about “Pantheism” God and creation equal in scope -Pantheism**

In the Christian tradition there is a fear that this kind of theology will lead people to venerate matter and that is condemned by the Church as a heresy, and that heresy is named **Pantheism**. Pantheism is described in terms of making God and creation equal in scope. that the universe is God and God is the universe.

To overcome the issue of Pantheism, Christian tradition has insisted on God’s **transcendence**, recognizing that God may be present within creation but cannot be reduced to creation. On the other hand, Christian tradition also talks about the **immanence** of God, meaning that God can be found within all creation. There are several biblical texts to justify these positions.

Conclusion: Look at the beauty and the scientific balance behind the whole of God’s creation that tells us that nothing is accidental.

In spite of this knowledge and awareness, the planet earth is under threat and according to Romans 8: 18-25, the whole creation is groaning.

What a mess we humans have made of God’s beautiful world! Pollution, forests wiped out, species of animals vanishing due to human actions, green-house gas CO2 damaging thin ozone layer, climate change, imbalance of weather pattern and hundreds of years of tribal warfare which still continues to destroy our world even today. What a mess we’ve made of God’s beautiful creation.

I would like to conclude with **Psalm 19** it begins with how clearly the sky reveals God’s glory! How plainly it shows what he has done! and how we can understand and see God through the creation. Each day announces the following day, yet it is speechless, no voice, no words used, yet their messages go out to the whole world. I see this as a wonderful metaphor. The voice of God then is speechless, yet the words go to the end of the world.

There is a voice in the creation, which the wise will listen to.

Amen, thanks be to God.

Hymn: ["Community of Christ" \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Lyrics: Shirley Murray

Tune: Leoni

1. Community of Christ, who make the cross your own,
Live out your creed and risk your life for God alone:
The God who wears your face, to whom all worlds belong,
Whose children are of every race and every song.

2. Community of Christ, look past the Church's door
And see the refugee, the hungry and the poor.
Take hands with the oppressed, the jobless in your street,
Take towel and water, that you wash your neighbour's feet.

3. Community of Christ, through whom the world must sound –
Cry out for justice and for peace the whole world round:
Disarm the powers that war and all that can destroy,
Turn bombs to bread, and tears of anguish into joy.

4. When menace melts away, so shall God's will be done,
The climate of the world be peace and Christ its sun;
Our currency be love and kindness our law,
Our food and faith be shared as one for evermore.

Intercessory Prayers

Contemporary Lord's Prayer:

Let us pray together:

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the people of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come
on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever.
Amen.**

Offertory Prayer:

Greeting of Peace:

Lord Jesus Christ, in your tenderness, bind us with bonds of love that cannot be broken.

My brothers and sisters, the peace of Christ be with you.

And with you also.

Let us greet one another with a sign of peace.

Hymn HFTC 560: [God Is Here! As We His People](#)

(Lyrics: F.Pratt Green 1903)

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

(The People Stand as they are able)

The risen Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

Salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers;

Let us lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light.

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

Therefore, let us keep the feast.

Yours is the glory, O God, for raising Jesus from the darkness of death. Yours is the glory, O Christ, for being prepared, through your love and your sacrifice, to conquer death and give us the gift of eternal life. And, as if that were not enough, you greet us by name, as you greeted Mary in the garden, and transform our lives forever with your Easter life.

Risen Lord, we worship and adore you; and we pray that your life in us, will conform us to your image, that we radiate your glory, through our witness, rejoicing and praise, and in all the places where people's lives are still affected by the powers of death and cross.

Yours is the glory, O God, for showing us the human face of your love in Jesus, your Son, our risen Lord.

Yours is the glory, risen Lord Jesus, and we rejoice that 'endless is the victory that you over death have won'.

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 Lord Christ; Your death we show forth; Your resurrection we proclaim; Your coming we await. Come risen Lord Jesus come.

(People may sit)

Breaking of the Bread:

As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We eat and drink with thanksgiving, remembering all that Jesus has done for us.

The Communion:

Prayer after Communion:

This has been no ordinary meal. It has been one in which we have been fed and nourished with the life of Jesus, our crucified and risen Lord. May we go from here, refreshed and eager, to share that life with others. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ the risen saviour. Amen

Hymn WOV 153: [This, This is the God We Adore](#)

1. This, this is the God we adore,
Our faithful, unchangeable friend;
Whose love is as great as his power,
And neither knows measure nor end.

2. 'Tis Jesus the first and the last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;
We'll praise him for all that is past,
And trust him for all that's to come.

Benediction & Grace

Do all the good you can,
by all the means you can,
in all the ways you can,
in all the places you can,
at all the times you can,
to all the people you can,
as long as ever you can. ([John Wesley](#))

Go now to love and serve!

We go in the name of Christ!

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

Amen - Threefold