



Kaurihohore Historic Church

Email: kaurichurch@gmail.com Phone: 946 0813



Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish

Sunday 23 February 2025 – Epiphany 7

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.

Sustainability: we care for and strive to restore the integrity of the Earth and all of creation.

Welcome

Kia ora e te whanau, greetings faith-family. Welcome to worship at Kaurihohore Church this morning, the seventh Sunday in the season of Epiphany. I bring you greetings from the Wellington South Union Parish. Brenda and I represented our church, and Alan Upson represented St. John's Golden Church when we, along with Rowan and Margaret Smiley, representing the Northland Methodist Synod, presented Freddy and Deepa into their care at Freddy's induction service on Sunday 9th February. I have a couple of orders of service here if anyone wants to read through them.

In the season of Epiphany, we are looking for new understandings or revelations, insights into what the Christian message is and how it applies in our lives and times. It is also a time to recoup our energies after the festival of Christmas and before we begin preparing for Easter through the season of Lent. Today our value focus is on Sustainability as we seek to restore the integrity of the Earth including the human communities of creation.

Let us worship together.

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

Call to Worship

(based on B. J. Beau, Abingdon Worship Annual 2019)

Jesus said, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you."

Come faith-family come to learn the life-giving way.

We have come to follow Jesus.

Love your enemies and do good to those who spitefully use you.

We have come to follow Jesus.

Bless those who curse you and pray for those who exploit you.

We have come to follow Jesus.

Behave towards others as you would like them to behave toward you.

We have come to follow Jesus.

Come faith-family come to learn the life-giving way of Jesus.

Opening Prayer

(based on B. J. Beau, Abingdon Worship Annual 2019)

Holy and loving God, Spirit of loving presence, source of our love and life,

Be with us in this time of worship as we seek the love it takes to follow Jesus.

Help us to love our enemies and to bless those who wrong us,

For we cannot do so in our own strength and limited willingness.

Teach us the joy of treating others with the same respect and goodness

We would like to be treated with in our turn.

Help us to become channels of your love spreading it to those we meet,

Making it known through our every act and deed. **Amen.**

Hymn HIOS 9: Beautiful Presence

(Lyrics: Joy Cowley, Music: Barry Brinson)

1. Beautiful presence, how can we name you?
Words are too small for the one who is all.
How can we speak of your gentleness to us,
The warmth of our hearts in response to your call?

Chorus:

Beautiful presence, ocean of love,
Strong as forever, soft as a dove.
Words often fail us, but this we know true,
You live within us as we live in you.

2. There have been times of spiritual blindness,
When error and pain have distorted our sight.
Beautiful presence, you were there with us,
To show us how darkness can turn into light.

Chorus:

3. Nothing that happens to us will be wasted,
All of our living is grounded in grace.
Gently you take down the walls of division,
Leading us on to a larger place.

Chorus:

Prayer for Centring and Renewal

Beautiful presence, ocean of love, help us to love our enemies,
guide us to bless those who wrong us,
inspire us to care for those who dominate, exploit and destroy,
for we cannot do so in our own strength alone.
Help us to discover the joy of treating others
with the care and respect we long to be treated with ourselves.
So that others may find your life-changing love and care as we live in you.

The Lord's Prayer - Sung AA112 [Our Father in Heaven](#)

(Lyrics: Richard Gillard and John Smith, Arr. Buy Jansen)

(Please remain seated)

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done
On earth as in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,
Forgive us our sins
As we forgive those
Who sin against us

Save us from the time of trial,
And deliver us
from evil.
For the king-dom
the power and glo...ry
Are yours now and for ever.
Amen, amen, amen, amen,
amen, amen, amen, amen

Readings

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised

Joseph reveals to his brothers the hidden story of God's life-preserving purposes being outworked in their lives.

Genesis 45:3-11, 15

³ Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come closer to me.' And they came closer. He said, 'I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶ For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvest. ⁷ God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸ So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹ Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, "Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. ¹⁰ You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹ I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty."

¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

As we listen to Jesus' encouragement to embody God's grace by loving our enemies and forgiving others, we ponder how, in living out this divine instruction, we participate in a reality shaped by compassion and generosity and carry the divine DNA into the world.

Love and bless others in the way you wish others would love and bless you. That's what God is like.

Luke 6:27-38

Love for Enemies

²⁷ 'But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt.

³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³² 'If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.^[a] Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Judging Others

³⁷ 'Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.'

Hymn HFTC 112: [Lord Jesus, Once You Spoke To Them](#)

1. Lord Jesus, once You spoke to men
Upon the mountain and the plain,
O help us listen now as then
And wonder at Your words again.

2. We all have secret fears to face,
Our minds and motives to amend.
We seek Your truth,
We need your grace,
Our living Lord and present friend.
3. The gospel speaks; and we receive
Your light, Your love,
Your own command.
O help us live what we believe,
In daily word of heart and hand.

Food for Thought

²⁷ ‘But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

This is a hard saying. Luke is not pulling any punches here on just what following Jesus really asks of us. At first sight, or hearing, it may sound preposterous; “if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again”? Really? “If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also”? What? Are we being directed to be passive in the face of aggression? I have found a helpful understanding of these sayings in a book by Walter Wink titled, “Jesus and Nonviolence: A Third Way.” So, I wanted to share some of what he had to say about the real meanings of these sayings with you this morning. Walter Wink was Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Auburn Theological Seminar in New York.

Today’s reading is taken from Luke’s so called, ‘Sermon on the Plain’ which is based on the same collection of Jesus’ sayings, often referred to as ‘Q’, that Matthew’s ‘Sermon of the Mount’ is. I think it may be helpful to explore the meaning of the first section of today’s gospel reading if we also compare it with Matthew’s version. Matthew 5:39-42 (pg 1507)

“³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; ⁴⁰ and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; ⁴¹ and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. ⁴² Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.”

In Hebrew society at that time your left hand was used at the toilet, everything else was done with the right hand. So, when you hit another person, it would be with your right hand. If someone facing you hits you on your right cheek, that implies they have just given you a backhander! That's an insult, not a fight. That's the way a person who sees themselves as superior treats someone who they see as inferior. The way a man would treat a slave, woman or child or other inferior with a backhander to emphasise his superiority. If you turn and offer the other cheek, the left cheek, to hit you that way with your right hand effectively you have to hit or punch the way you would another man as an equal, not an inferior. So, turning the other cheek forces the aggressor to face you as an equal, to openly show their aggression to anyone observing and hopefully challenges them to acknowledge it to themselves.

It is a powerful, but non-violent way of saying, "I deny you the power to humiliate me. I am a human being just like you. Your status does not demean me."

Turn to face a neighbour and try it out. Not violently, of course, but get the feel of what Jesus is saying here.

First your right hand to their right cheek. Got that? That way it's a demeaning backhander. A put-down. Know your place.

Now try your right hand to their left cheek. To hit the other person on their left cheek with your right hand backhanded their nose is in the way. To connect, you either can only manage a rather soft slap forward, because there's not enough room, or you have to step back to give you room to make it a full forehand slap, or to be effective it's a fist punch. Either way you are forced to confront them more directly face-to-face, to treat your victim as an equal. The point is made. It is not passivity but non-violent confrontation.

Similarly, the next part of the reading, "from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt." Now in Jesus' day men normally wore two garments, an undershirt and an outer cloak or coat. If you were poor, you may offer your outer garment, your cloak or coat as security for a loan, perhaps to buy food for your family, but the law in Deuteronomy, (24:12-13; pg 309) required the lender to give the cloak back overnight so you could sleep in it. Nakedness was taboo in Judaism, and shame fell not on the naked person but on anyone viewing or causing one's nakedness. So, here again Jesus is not saying, as we may suppose, "let wealthy people take all you have", or "let the rich and powerful walk all over you." He is in fact saying, "Confront what is being done to you, expose the injustice of the creditor, offer him the chance to see, perhaps for the first time in his life, what the way he uses his wealth does to you, and maybe to repent."

Like the way Joseph's brothers are shocked and initially can't believe he's alive nor can they dare to talk to him, those following Jesus' injunctions here would find shocked disbelief in those they confronted so unconventionally. Status hierarchies are normal in New Zealand now just as they were in ancient Egypt and in Israel in Jesus' time. But there was a time when we prided ourselves on being a much more egalitarian society, a society shaped and moulded by Christian Gospel values where each human being was seen and valued equally as a citizen, a child of God, regardless of what family they came from or what occupation they had. A society of equals in which contributing to the common good was valued highly.

I'd like to quote here from "Memories of Kaurihohore and Vinegar Hill." "Although these people had a deeply rooted objection to expressing in words the faith that was theirs, they effectively showed it in the lives they led.

It would be hard to find a body of people whose moral standard was higher and who applied the principles of Christianity in a more practical manner. Though not without their faults, they had a high standard of integrity and character. No man tried to take advantage of his neighbour, so there was no litigation. Deals were settled with a handshake; a man's word was his bond. They were generous to a fault.

Harvesting, bush-felling, and house raising - all were done by collective labour. Sometimes as many as forty men would gather together at one farm with their axes, reaping hooks or whatever tools were needed for the job in hand. Then on to the next farm the next day to help with whatever urgently needed doing there."

At the core of today's readings there is this theme of treating others compassionately as equals. That's the way Joseph responds to his brothers regardless of the way they had treated him. That's the way Jesus is calling us to treat those in our lives regardless of how they treat us. The core of the Christian Gospel is to Love God, and your neighbour as yourself. Treating others as we would like to be treated in turn is a good start on this journey.

The surprising element Jesus introduces in this reading is the importance of confronting those who are not treating you how you would like to be treated with disarming nonviolent strength as well as compassion. We are taught to love our enemies in a way that we expose their inhumanity to them, to give them the opportunity to face it and to change. Turning the other cheek is not an injunction to passivity but a command to love by challenging sinfulness wherever we experience it, including in ourselves. Giving in to becoming a victim is still sinful because it does not challenge the sinner to see their sin and repent.

How then do we handle our own judgementalism? Two tips I gained from this week's email from Andrew Doubleday, our Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand, Ministry Facilitator were;

1. When feeling unjustly judged by someone else, remind yourself, they do not know what only you know about you and what was going on for you. It is so easy to feel hurt and to hurt back or to cower in self-pity.

2. Similarly, when making a judgement of someone else remind yourself you too do not know what they know, what has happened in their life, how they have been treated, what they have experienced, so be gentle in how you judge. It is so easy to become self-righteous.

Hopefully, if we can put these lessons into practice; nonviolent confrontation and compassionate judgement, we will move toward building empathy in our relationships and sustainability in our communities.

In the week in which the Salvation Army's 2024-5 "State of the Nation" Report was released it is easy and tempting to become very judgemental of our fellow New Zealanders and of social and economic systems. We are called to love, and to be compassionately judgemental, not to remain passive victims either for ourselves or for our communities.

In the last couple of weeks, we have seen examples of this with the President of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, Te Hahi Weteriana o Aotearoa, Te Aroha Rountree, in her kauwhau (sermon) at the Waitangi Dawn Service challenging the Government on their commitment to Te Tiriti O Waitangi. In that sermon she affirmed again, "We cannot claim to follow a gospel of justice while turning a blind eye to the inequities that persist in this land."

Last week she also issued a statement that the Methodist Church of New Zealand stands in unwavering solidarity with our LGBTQ+ whānau, in response to recent attacks from Destiny Church and others who seek to harm and to marginalise them. She concluded that statement saying, "The Gospel calls us to love one another as Christ has loved us. Love does not tolerate harm. Love does not stand by in silence. Love acts. We choose love."

The challenge of today's gospel then is not to return enmity with enmity, or violence with violence, nor is it to retreat into weak passivity and acquiescence to injustice. I believe Jesus is asking us - Are you willing to take a stand, to assert your God-given personhood while also affirming that of your enemy, to voice a contrary opinion, to stand alongside others who are being victimised, or, by your non-action do you condone behaviours that put others down or threaten them, destroy relationships and erode community solidarity."

To judge and to condemn is to distance yourself from the other, your enemy, to deny relationship. Luke's Jesus instead exhorts us:

³⁷ 'Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.'

God invites us all into his community of faith, to become his body with his life-blood coursing through our veins. That is what we celebrate here this morning. Are you willing to commit to his way of love?

Community Time: Notices, Joys & Concerns

Prayers of the People

Spirit of Love, Holy God, be with us in all the activities and events on our calendars and in our diaries. We celebrate the joys of sharing in doing things together, of bodies and relationships healing, of hopeful growth and change.

We give you thanks that we can do things that make a difference in peoples' lives around us, our partners, family members, friends and neighbours, the people we meet and those we contact at a distance.

We share our joy in being able to participate in this service together (and in

We pray for those embroiled in war and conflict, those suffering from illness and disease, those who are in mourning, lonely, hopeless. Help us to be aware of those we can make a difference for and help us to care respectfully for those we cannot.

We pray especially this morning for Freddy as he comes towards the end of his first month in his new parish and role in Wellington, and for Deepa as she too adjusts to a new home, job and community.

We pray for those we have mentioned, (.....). and for those we have not mentioned.

Heavenly Father open our eyes to see where we can make a difference and help us to do whatever we can to build your kingdom into this world. **Amen.**

Hymn AA 100: [Now To Your Table Spread We Come](#)

(Lyrics: Shirley Murray Tune: Love Unknown)

1. Now to your table spread we come, each one in faith
that you alone provide the words of life or death:
in wine and bread, in promised food
we find your loving heart, O God.
2. Hands of the world stretch out, your mystery to touch
in longing to believe a truth beyond our reach,
to sing in joy, to cry in grief,
to know your meaning for our life.
3. Here is our common wealth in sharing what is good,
as though all humankind around one table stood,
this bread to break, this wine to taste:
one people in the name of Christ.

Offering and Prayer of Dedication

**Holy and loving God, we come, each one, in faith,
celebrating your forgiveness, trusting ourselves to your love.
We come bringing ourselves, our gifts and our time,
to share what is good.
Bless these gifts, this bread and this wine.
Bless us as we remember your presence among us. Amen.**

The Peace

Let us greet one another with a handshake or a hug and bless each other in the words, **“The peace of God be with you.”**

Communion

During his earthly life, Jesus was often a guest of the rich and of the poor. Here he is the host. What we do here, we do in imitation of what Jesus first did with his disciples.

On the night of his betrayal and arrest, as he shared a meal with his friends, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his followers, saying:

“This is my body that is for you. Do this to remember me.”

When supper was over, he took the cup, and gave it to his disciples saying:

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this to remember me.”

We set aside these elements to this holy purpose.

Let us pray:

The Lord be with you

And also with you

Lift up your hearts

We lift them to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

It is right to give him our thanks and praise.

God of love, spirit of compassion, bless us and this bread and wine.

May this meal be food and drink for our journey, renewing, sustaining and making us whole as we join in the song of the saints of all ages.

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.

Lord, we come before you now, yearning to know your healing presence and the accepting love which Christ offers. *(Silence)*

Send your Holy Spirit that through this holy sacrament we may know your transforming love and become shaped into the body and life of him whose food we share. **Amen.**

Among friends gathered around a table, Jesus took bread, broke it and said, “This is my body broken for you.”

After supper he took the cup and said, “This is the new relationship with God, made possible through my death. Drink it, all of you, to remember me.”

We remember Jesus, who taught us to love our enemies;

Christ, have mercy on us.

We remember Jesus, who called all to God’s kingdom;

Christ, have mercy on us.

We remember Jesus who rose to live among us and in us;

Christ, grant us your peace.

You are invited to join the kingdom of God's love. All are welcome. The feast is spread. Come to the table of love. At this table we will find strength for our journeys and rest for our souls.

The bread of life for all who hunger

The body of Christ, broken for us.

The cup of compassion for a broken world

The blood of Christ shed for all.

Go from this table bearing the love of God into a troubled world.

Go from this table knowing the peace which passes all understanding.

Go from this table renewed, to renew the world God loves.

Prayer after Communion

Loving God, you have called us out of isolation, selfishness and greed, into the freedom of trusting you with our lives, and into belonging in this faith community. We join with you and with each other, in faith in this covenant of membership in your kingdom.

Lead us, as your people, to live your love into the life of this world, that we may truly be the Body of Christ, inspired by your Holy Spirit within us, to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you.

Amen

Hymn FFS 67: We Are Many, We Are One

(Lyrics: Colin Gibson, Tune: Hamilton)

1. We are many, we are one,
and the work of Christ is done
when we learn to live in true community,
 as the stars that fill the night, as a flock of birds in flight,
 as the cluster of the grapes upon the vine;
 as the branches of a tree, as the waves upon the sea,
 as the cluster of the grapes upon the vine.
2. All division is made whole
when we honour every soul,
find the life of God in every you and me,
 as the fingers of a hand, as the grains that form the sand,
 as the cluster of the grapes upon the vine;
 as the threads upon a loom, as a field of flowers in bloom,
 as the cluster of the grapes upon the vine.

3. We will join creation's song,
make a world where all belong,
build as one in peace and loving harmony,
as the voices of a choir, as the flames within a fire,
as the cluster of the grapes upon the vine;
as the snowflakes in the snow, as the colours of a bow,
as the cluster of the grapes upon the vine.

Commissioning and Blessing

Go now, members of the Body of Christ, to learn to live in true community,
To honour every soul, to make a world where all belong,
To live at one with all, in peace and loving harmony,
blessing everyone in the character of the Lord.

(We sing the blessing to each other)

The Lord bless you and keep you:

**The Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious unto you:**

**The Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.**

Sung Amen *(Threefold)*