



Kaurihohore Historic Church

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Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish

Sunday 23 March 2025 – Lent 3

Today's service has been prepared by Rosalie Gwilliam,
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.

Welcome

Call to Worship

Come, all you who are thirsty.

In our God, we find living water.

Come, all you who hunger.

In our God, our hunger will be satisfied.

Come, all you who long for love.

The steadfast love of God never ceases.

Prayer

Loving God, our living water, our soul thirsts for you. We are thirsty for your wisdom when we are limited by our own minds and ideas.

We are thirsty for your love, when the ones we love seem to let us down.

We are thirsty for your peace, when our world seems to be in turmoil.

We are thirsty for your joy, that goes beyond worldly pleasures.

We are thirsty for you in our lives.

Pour your spirit into us this day. Amen

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

Song CMP 37: [As the Deer Pants](#)

Lyrics and Music by Martin Nystrom

As the deer pants for the water,
so my soul longs after you.

You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.

You alone are my strength and shield,
to you alone may my spirit yield.

You alone are my heart's desire,
and I long to worship you.

Lenten Candles

Meditation

There is so much during the day that clamours for our attention. Friends, family, work, classes, household tasks. And the noise! We are bombarded with sound, from the clock that awakens us to the telephone, the radio, the television, the conversation that we have or overhear. Where is the time and place to listen for the still, small voice of God? Sometimes it seems that God would have to speak in a whirlwind to be heard above the clamour! Listen now.

There is a place of quiet rest, and it is the place where God dwells within you. Close your eyes. Be aware of the place. In Lent we journey to the parts of ourselves known only to God, beneath the clamour. Let the story of Jesus reach us there. Let it teach us wisdom in our secret hearts.

Silent time

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of violence in the world and to the Earth.

A candle is extinguished

Let us pray

Draw us together in your love, O God. May our restless hearts not resist you, but continue to search until they find rest in you. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen

Prayer – Psalm 63: 1-8 Comfort and assurance in God's presence

Lord's Prayer

Hymn HFTC 28: [Amazing Grace](#)

Scripture Readings

In the reading from Isaiah this morning, we hear that the unmerited favour of the Lord is promised to those who turn to him. 'Turn to the Lord! He can still be found. Call out to God! He is near.'

Isaiah 55: 1-9

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Reflection

Head south from Tuscon, Arizona, and you could find yourself in the Sonoran Desert. The desert straddles the Mexico-United States border and has become a migration corridor for asylum-seekers escaping poverty and violence in their homeland. These people are desperate, and they are faced with a lethally, harsh environment on this last part of their journey. The landscape is arid, and summertime temperatures reach over 40 degrees Celsius. Migrants, often travelling in family groups, mainly moving at night to escape the heat. But the ever-present threat of exhaustion and dehydration results in an ever-growing number of deaths in these borderlands between Mexico and the United States. When their supplies have run out, one can only imagine the despairing longing for water in the scorching heat.

According to a news report, a humanitarian organisation called No more Deaths, works to make the Mexico-United States border a little less deadly by leaving containers of water in the places where people are thirsty and dying of dehydration. Their report details how the United States Border control has cracked down on migrant justice initiatives in general and no More Deaths in particular, arresting volunteers on criminal charges ranging from misdemeanour to felony. However, a case that actually came to court was dismissed by the judge on the basis that the actions were motivated by 'sincerely held religious beliefs', and government prosecution would amount to a violation of religious liberty!

Water can be a matter of life and death. In today's Psalm, David uses this metaphor to speak of his longing for God: 'you are my God. I seek you. My soul thirsts for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.' I long for a stream in a scorching desert.

It is true that when we are not in touch with our God, we become parched, like being confined to a waterless wilderness. While some may grow accustomed to living in this waterless place – arid of meaning and purpose – this Psalm represents a longing for more. It speaks of the restless dissatisfaction that comes of not knowing God's presence. It is what Saint Augustine writes about in his Confessions, when he states 'You have made us for Yourself O God and our hearts are restless in you.'

For David, the restlessness is satisfied. He finds God in both the desert and the sanctuary. He gets to drink from the stream in the desert and sees God's glory and power in the place of worship. He discovers God's love, and it means more to him than life itself.

The Hebrew word translated to English 'love' is 'hesed'. This is a rich word which is hard to translate with a single English equivalent. It is one of the central concepts of the First Testament and often comes up in our readings. It is sometimes translated with double-banger words to bring out its fuller meaning: 'loving kindness' and 'steadfast love.' It is full of tones of compassion and faithfulness. It speaks of the committed loyalty that God has toward us, his people.

In the desert and in the sanctuary, Lent is the time for us to intentionally seek God; to know more of God's power and glory and to live in the richness of his love. David calls it a shield and shelter that we live under. It is the source of our security and joy.

It is a time to take a solitary walk outdoors using the opportunity to talk to God about our thoughts and ambitions, and listen to his still small voice of guidance.

It is a time to take a lead from David who says to the Lord, 'I think about You on my bed, and meditate on You in the watches of the night.'

When our hearts long for God, as one would long for a stream in a desert, we grow in trust and awareness of the Divine presence to help. To find this security and love means more than life itself!

The Psalm is an invitation for us in this season of Lent to seek afresh the presence of God. It belongs together with our reading this morning from Isaiah. 'If you are thirsty, come and drink water! Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.'

'Turn to the Lord! He can still be found. Call out to God! He is near.'

Hymn: Living Water *Lyrics by: Jan Chamberlin Tune: Nottingham*

1. Living water, wellspring vast,
reservoir from ages past:
let me come and drink my fill;
baptise me to do your will.

2. Send me out to serve once more
in the river's rush and roar.
Lord of water's power and force,
keep me on my rightful course.

3. When in stagnant pools I dream,
push me out into the stream;
help me cheer my friends along;
test me in the current strong.

4. Give me strength to persevere
till I reach the ocean clear;
knowing that, my Lord, my friend,
you'll be with me to the end.

Offering Dedication

God of abundant love, we thank you for your abundant gifts as we return a portion of those gifts back to you. Tend the roots of our lives, that we may continue to bear much fruit. Tend the shoots of this church, that we may be a forest filled with life-giving fruit and haven like shade for a world hungering for your love and desperate for your protection. In gratitude, we pray. Amen

Community Time: Celebrations, Notices

Prayer

The Giving Tree is a storybook written by Shel Silverstein that tells of the relationship between a boy and a tree. As the boy grows, he asks the tree for different things to help him in his life. The tree offers the boy different gifts at different stages in his life.

Like the Giving Tree, we might think we have nothing left to offer, but our gifts change – our fruit changes. There will always be something we have to offer others. It is in the waiting and discerning this that sometimes it will appear right before us – like the boy returning yet again to his tree.

What is it we have to give right now? What is the fruit of our lives that might be lifegiving to someone else?

Let us silently pray for guidance and encouragement as we consider those in need in our community, those we personally know and those unknown to us.

Compassionate God, hear our prayers. Amen.

Hymn HFTC 408: [I Come with Joy to Meet my Lord](#)

Holy Communion

The Great Thanksgiving

Lift up your hearts!

We lift them up to God!

Let us give thanks to Yahweh, our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We give thanks and praise to you, O Bread of Life!
We give thanks for your abundant creation, called forth in ancient times upon this earth, and manifested in your grace when you created us in your very image. From ancient times you have fed us, nourished us, and strengthened our souls for this journey.

In the days of wandering in the wilderness, in the songs of psalmists, and in the harsh wisdom of the prophets, you have offered us the water of righteousness and the bread of justice.

In the fullness of time, you came to us in the presence of Jesus Christ – the bread of abundant life, eternal, living water.

Even when facing death, Christ gave thanks and blessed the fruit of this, your good earth, offering not only bread and wine, but the bread that always satisfies, and life that never ends.

We remember Christ's grace-filled words:

Take, eat, this is my body, broken for you.

Take, drink, this is my life poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.

As we walk this journey of life, we remember these gifts as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Prayer

Grant us your grace, and shower your Spirit upon these gifts. Transform this bread into the mercy for which we hunger. Create in this sacrament the new wine of grace for which we thirst. Create in us a new community of abundant love, that we may be life giving disciples of Christ, one with each other, one in unity with you through the Holy Spirit, and one in ministry to the world that hungers for your grace and mercy. Amen

Invitation to Communion

Come to the bread of life, all who hunger for love.

Come to this living water, all who thirst for righteousness.

Come to the shelter of God, all who face danger and persecution.

Come to the shade of Christ's love, all who suffer sorrow and grief.

Come to the Lamb of God, all who need mercy and grace.

Come to the table of love, all who yearn for the abundant gifts of God, offered in Christ and the Holy Spirit.

The body of Christ broken for us
The cup poured out for us, and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.

Prayer

Lord, God of world-changing love, we thank you for this meal and for welcoming us to your table.

We remember that we are your children and that you have called us to share the life-giving water to those who are thirsty. Help us to receive your life, walk in your strength, and follow your ways every moment of our lives. Amen

Hymn HFTC 584: [To God Be the Glory](#)

Blessing

And now, as we leave this place where we have been fed and sustained, may we enter the wilderness places of this world taking with us the living water and the bread of life.

Benediction

May the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer be with us each step of the way.

Sung Amen