




KAURIHOHORE / KAMO CO-OPERATING PARISH

kaurichurch.methodist.org.nz 

kaurichurch@gmail.com 

946 0813 

Sunday 25 May 2025 – Easter 6

Today's service has been prepared by Rev Alan Upson,
our Parish Superintendent

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.

Inclusiveness: we recognise the full equality of the entire human family to share in ministry, leadership, and worship, regardless of race, age, physical ability, neurodiversity, marital or economic status, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Welcome and Introduction - *Trusting in God's Mothering Ways*

Lighting the Candle

We light this candle to signify that this is a special place and time in our week, on our journey with Christ, in Learning to Love as God loves us.

Brighten our days, loving Christ, lighten our way, Holy Spirit,

Gather us as one family. Creator God

Amen

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

Call to Worship (PS 67 NIV)

May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face shine on us
so that your ways may be known on earth,
your salvation among all nations.

**May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you.**

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

May the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you rule the peoples with equity
and guide the nations of the earth.

**May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you.**

The land yields its harvest;
God, our God, blesses us.

**May God bless us still,
so that all the ends of the earth will revere him.**

Hymn WOV 7: [Praise to the Living God](#) (Tune: Leoni)

Words: Jewish doxology

trans. Max Landsberg and Newton Mann, 1914

1. Praise to the living God!
All praise be to his name
who was, and is, and is to be,
for aye the same.
The one eternal God
before what now appears:
the First, the Last, beyond all thought
his timeless years!
2. Formless, all lovely forms
declare her (his) loveliness;
holy, no holiness of earth
can her (his) express.
Behold the Lord of all:
creation speaks her (his) praise,
and everywhere above, below,
her (his) will obeys.
3. God's Spirit freely flows,
high surging where it will:
in prophet's word she (he) spoke of old:
is speaking still.
Established is God's law,
and changeless it shall stand,
deep written on the human heart,
on sea, on land.

4. God has eternal life
implanted in the soul;
his love shall be our strength and stay
while ages roll.
Praise to the living God,
all praise be to his Name
who was, and is, and is to be,
and still the same.

Mothering God Prayer

Dear loving God,
In creation, at the birth of the universe,
you brought into being everything that exists.

**From nothing but chaos
your brooding spirit covered this planet,
and in love you made the land, sea and air,
and found it good.**

Then on this rich earth
you created all living things, and found it good.

**Male and Female, we were created in your likeness,
and you found in each of us a soul-mate.**

Thanks Mothering God, for bearing us, bringing us to life.

**Thanks for your watching over me from before my birth,
when my bones were forming in my mother's womb.**

Thanks for not lording it over us, for not smothering
our learning with rules and punishments.

**Thanks for being with me in my moments of despair,
suddenly there, a light in my darkness.**

Thanks for lifting us into your arms
when the going got so tough
that we couldn't take another step.

**Thanks for smiling at my joy
when using the skills you gave me;
proving again what I could do
when in partnership with you
and in the process, pass another milestone in my life.**

Thank you for your values of being The Word, Wisdom, Sophia
there from the beginning of all that is;
Remind us again of your bubbling, vivacious spirit
eager to bring joy, hope, peace and love.

**As we enter this time of worship
we remember your never-ending blessing
and give you our heartfelt thanks.
Amen**

The Lord's Prayer (*in any language*)

Family Time - *Learning to Trust*

Hymn AA 118: [Sing a Happy Alleluiah](#)

(Words by Shirley Murray Tune: Stansfield Colin Gibson)

- 1 Sing a happy alleluia!
 Sing it out with heart and style,
We're the echo of God's laughter,
 we're the image of God's smile.

 *Alleluia, all creation,
 alleluia everyone,
 alleluia, all creation,
 alleluia, everyone!*
- 2 We're the proof of God's good humour,
 we're the twinkle in God's eye,
made to shine, reflect God's glory,
 given light and space to fly -
- 3 Sarah laughed at God's good timing,
 Mary sang and David danced,
Jesus smiled and hugged the children -
 so for us is life enhanced.
- 4 Every day sing alleluia!
 we are loved, though so absurd,
human, foolish, chosen people,
 God still takes us at our word!

Readings: Acts 16: 9-15
 John 14: 23-29

Reflection: *Trusting God's Love in People and Places*

On a number of levels, I can only describe this past week as significant. At St John's Golden Church, the Power Point projector went awol and had to be sent off to Auckland for repairs. Then there were two funerals, one of a parishioner's mother and the other of Graham Palmer a long term attender with a Presbyterian background. Steady, reliable and loyal, Graham and his wife Robyn were always there, friendly in nature and deep in faith. The Jane Mander afternoon communion service congregation numbered 23 and the Tuesday 9.30am meditation group 4. It's in it's early days.

Personally, a cardiology appointment following an echocardiogram, that routinely follows a heart by-pass operation, pronounced my heart to be in good heart.

I just need to keep taking my medications, watch what I eat and do more walking. Sound familiar? Then, after a lunchtime celebration of my birthday with Kerry, I felt, possibly for the first time in my life, proud of my age. To balance my enthusiasm, my computer spit the dummy on Wednesday afternoon while preparing this service.

On another level again, going out to get the paper before sunrise, I've heard a thrush boldly announcing that it is Spring. Then later that day, I saw two blackbirds playing courting games, one chasing the other on the power lines, and looking out over the grassed area beyond the dog-training ground when going into town, two Pukeko behaving the same way. What's more, the plum tree that usually starts coming to life in late August, has sprung out in flower.

I don't need to read the paper, or watch the news on TV or my dead computer, to know that something more significant is happening in our world. Which should make my minor week's events look less significant. The same could be said about another budget that seems to care more about protecting power and wealth, and less concerned about our diversity of people or our children's future. The world we depend upon for our daily living is changing and we're in grave danger of not noticing. I know this isn't fresh news. But the birds and the trees know it and we seem to care. We just follow the patterns of our yesterdays. I ask myself, "Why"?

So it was with some shock and anticipation, that I saw a sentence that read '*Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis explores how oppressive images of God lead us to limit and even exclude ourselves from the divine image.* It went on. In her book '*She Is Love, She Is Love,*' Lewis writes, '*It makes sense that because white men created so much of religion, the image of God was an old white man with grey hair. However, this image needs a makeover because he's no longer working.* *'

Being one myself, an old white man with white hair, I thought ‘That lets me out – mine’s not grey’. Then I thought that the Christian religion began with men and women of the Mediterranean and Mid-East. They weren’t white as I am. Many of the young ones in the Western world were happy with the old image of God. Following that through, at the same time as asking, “What’s this got to do with the birds and the trees?” a light came on in my wanderings. Lewis is talking about Europeans who have shaped God’s image to justify their way of life. It can’t be the same God who is worshipped by two peoples at war. A God who created a world of plenty, is not the same God worshipped by Christians who lived in palaces while others had to sleep in cars. Christian countries who ruled that women should be paid less than men for doing the same kind of job, can’t have the same God image as those who believe that ‘To be a woman is more than enough’.

How about voices in Wellington hiding thoughts of “We’ll have none of that heathen Haka in our Westminster Parliament”. Truth hasn’t any better chance than it did in the Palace of Pilate at the sentencing of Jesus.

In the hymn by Marnie Barrell that follows, we’ll sing the words, *“every face reflects God’s image, never any two the same.”* there’s no hope then. We all make God in the frenzy of our imaginings, to suit our own purposes. Only the birds and the trees read God’s signs correctly. The birds sing, “Humans have changed my world” and the plum tree proclaims, “I can’t help it - because of humans.” And we are in grave danger of worshipping our own idols, like those strange peoples of the Bible.

Perhaps though, we are like the Plum tree and can’t help ourselves. And there lies our salvation. If only we can give up the image of God as an old white man with grey hair because he’s no longer working, the things of our own making. Maybe then can we start to hear the truth of the world that the thrush sings about, and see the broken seasons that the Plum tree experiences. This is a new truth. For a start this truth is not of our making. It’s of our discovering. Putting aside our distractions, we can begin again to see the earth as belonging to God. Seeing God as neither male nor female, but both, opens our eyes to the imbalance of our traditional image of God.

In the reading from Acts this morning, we hear of Paul going to the river for some quiet time and finding some women there. They get talking. Paul, strong-minded and confident, finds a woman equally so, and sure enough of herself to invite him and the others to go to her place to explore the Christ whose Kingdom is not of this world. The God known to the plum tree and the thrush, guides both the women and Paul’s group. In Lydia’s words, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home”.

So began the church at Phillippi.

The other reading this morning from John's Gospel has Jesus praying for the disciples. Speaking of leaving them and then returning at some later time, but meanwhile being introduced to the company and guidance of God's Spirit, Jesus says, "I am going away and I am coming to you." Maybe Jesus was talking about the second coming but maybe we know that also in our present. Jesus comes and goes, depending on our wanting to make the Christ our image of God. And as Paul realised, in meeting the business woman Lydia as an equal, his image of the Christ changed.

**Jacqui Lewis, "the Mendicant" To Be a Woman Is More Than Enough CAC Meditations, Thursday, May 15, 2025*

Hymn AA55: Great and Deep the Spirit's Purpose
(Words by Marnie Barrell)

- 1 Great and deep the Spirit's purpose,
hidden now in mystery,
Nature bursts with joyful promise,
ripe with what is yet to be.
In a wealth of rich invention,
still the work of art unfolds:
barely have we seen, and faintly,
what God's great salvation holds.
- 2 Great and deep the Spirit's purpose,
making Jesus seen and heard.
Every age of God's creation
grasps new meaning from the Word.
Show us, Holy Spirit, show us
your new work begun today:
eyes and ears and hearts are open,
teach us what to do and say.
- 3 Great and deep the Spirit's purpose:
all God's children brought to birth,
freed from hunger, fear and evil
every corner of the earth,
and a million million voices
speak with joy the Saviour's name;
every face reflects his image,
never any two the same.

- 4 Great and deep the Spirit's purpose,
nothing shall be left to chance.
All that lives will be united
in the everlasting dance.
All fulfilled and all perfected,
each uniquely loved and known,
Christ in glory unimagined
once for all receives his own.

Offering

Prayers for Others

THE COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Is God our maker here?

God is here.

Is Christ among us?

He is.

Is the Spirit here?

The life giving Spirit is in our midst.

And who are we?

We are God's people, redeemed by grace.

*Lord we celebrate your amazing grace,
seen throughout all the earth.*

From a wandering nomad,

you created a new community;

for a burdened people,

you raised up those who could inspire;

when your people rebelled,

you sent your prophets.

*We praise you for sending your son, Christ Jesus,
who comes in your name.*

He is the word that brings salvation.

His is the hand you stretch out to sinners

His is the way that leads to peace.

*With the Spirit as our guide,
you lead us into truth,
you quench hatred with mercy,
you transform our strife and change our hearts.
And so we gather round Your table,
to sing with all creation,
holy, holy is the Lord.*

**Glory to you, Lord Christ,
Your death we remember,
your resurrection we celebrate,
your presence we proclaim.**

*We praise you Lord God, host of all creation,
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who, on the night he was betrayed,
took bread, gave thanks, broke it
and gave it to his disciples, saying,
“Take this and eat it. This is my body given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”
In the same night, after supper, he took the cup,
gave thanks and gave it to them, saying,
“Drink from it, all of you.
This is the blood of the new covenant
poured out for all the people for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me.”
And in remembrance of all you have done in Jesus,
who died, is risen and will come in glory,
we respond to your gracious invitation.*

**With outstretched arms you welcome us all.
The feast is now ready,
Your grace is sufficient for us.
Your grace is sufficient for me.
Amen**

Hymn FFS 38: [In the Singing](#)

(Tune: Bread of Peace – Carlton R. Young, Words by Shirley Murray)

- 1** In the singing, in the silence,
in the hands expectant, open,
in the blessing, in the breaking,
in the Presence at this table,

*Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ,
be the wine of grace:
Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ,
be the bread of peace.*

2 In the question, in the answer,
in the moment of acceptance,
in the heart's cry, in the healing,
in the circle of your people,

*Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ,
be the wine of grace:
Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ,
be the bread of peace.*

Breaking of the Bread

The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.
The cup we take is a sharing in the life of Christ.
God's gifts for all the world.
The world united in God's gift
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Invitation

Sharing of Bread and Wine

Prayer after Communion

*We thank you that you feed us not only with bread and wine,
but with your living presence.*

*We thank you that we have been united in your love,
and embraced by your outstretched arms.*

*Send us out to be signs of your grace,
offering the hospitality of Christ to all we meet.*

Wherever we are **be with me.**

Wherever we go, **walk with me.**

Wherever you lead, **may I follow.**

**In each and every situation,
in every moment of my life,
may I always know
your grace is sufficient for me.**

- 1 **Ma te marie a te Atua**
 The peace of God
Tatou katoa e tiaki;
 keep us all.
Mana ano e whakau
 He will confirm
O tatou ngakau ki te pai
 our hearts in goodness.

- 2 **Ma te Atua Tamaiti ra,**
 May the Son of God
Ma te Wairua Tapu hoki
 and the Holy Spirit too,
Ratou, Atua kotahi nei.
 one God
Tatou katoa e whakapai.
 bless us all.
Amen

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