



KAURIHOHORE / KAMO
CO-OPERATING PARISH

kaurichurch.methodist.org.nz

kaurichurch@gmail.com

(09) 946 0813

59 Apotu Road, Kauri Hohore



Sunday 28 September 2025 – Pentecost 16

Creation 4 – Cosmos Sunday

The service today 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.

Humility: we recognise we do not have all the answers but are prayerfully journeying together as we try to seek them.

Welcome

Kia ora e te whanau, greetings faith-family. Welcome to worship at Kauri Hohore Church this morning the sixteenth Sunday of the Season of Pentecost, and Cosmos Sunday, the last Sunday in our celebration of the Season of Creation. It is Citizenship Sunday too. It is also the end of the fiftieth Māori Language week, so I have included some Te Reo in the opening prayer and in the benediction in tribute to this important milestone.

Today we focus on our core value of **Humility:** we recognise we do not have all the answers but are prayerfully journeying together as we try to seek them. It is easy to overlook that we are living in the wealthiest, most privileged and most educated times in the history of humanity and belong to the richest group of nations in the world, the OECD. We so easily take for granted what is normal for us, fresh water, fit to drink, freely available from a communal supply funded through common-good rates; fresh air, fit to breathe, freedom of information and access to ideas and perspectives from all around the world, the chance to gaze up at the stars at night, knowing what astronomers are discovering about the universe we live in. For most of the history of human life on this planet and for most people alive today we are unbelievably wealthy and privileged. So, Humility can be a real challenge for us.

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

On this fourth Sunday of the month, we have our monthly communion service. The format we use for communion is based on the Church of Christ tradition; we serve the bread to everyone, then eat together and similarly, serve the juice to each and drink together. Then the cups are collected.

In his gospel Luke tells the story of the beginning of Jesus' ministry in Nazareth where he read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah,

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor."

Our theme today picks up that same message from Luke's gospel in chapter sixteen and our reading from the letter to Timothy elaborates on it too.

Let us then join in worship together.

Call to Worship

Come, seekers of wonder and wisdom

We gather in the vastness of God's grace

Come, lovers of stars and stories

We gather in awe before the Creator of all

Come, listeners to parables and prophets

We gather to be shaped by holy truths

Come, those rich in mercy and hungry for justice

We gather to live lives of compassion and generosity

Come, beyond comfort and complacency

We gather to be stirred into faith-filled action

Come, with the weight of wealth or worry

We gather to be unburdened by Christ's call

Come, into the joy of sacred community

We gather to walk the way of peace and purpose

Come, children of stardust and Spirit

We gather to be lit by divine love

Opening Prayer

He hōnore, he korōria ki te Atua	<i>Honour and glory to God</i>
He maungārongo ki te whenua	<i>Peace on Earth</i>
He whakaaro pai ki ngā tāngata katoa	<i>Goodwill to all people</i>
Hangā e te Atua he ngākau hou	<i>Lord, develop a new heart</i>
Ki roto, ki tēnā, ki tēnā o mātou	<i>Inside all of us</i>
Whakatōngia to wairua tapu	<i>Instil in us your sacred spirit</i>
Hei awhina, hei tohutohu i a mātou	<i>Help us, guide us</i>
Hei ako hoki i ngā mahi mō tēnei rā	<i>In all the things we need to learn today</i>
Amine	Amen

Hymn AA 54: God Of The Galaxies

(Lyrics: Shirley Murray Tune: Douglas Mews)

1. God of the galaxies spinning in space,
God of the smallest seed, our living source:
yours is the gift of this beautiful place.

Refrain: Let us care for your garden and honour the earth.

2. Careless and covetous, gross are our greeds,
taking the riches the garden provides,
wasting its goodness, forgetting its needs, *(Refrain)*
3. Forests and rivers are ravaged and die,
raped is the land till it bleeds in its clay,
silenced the birdsong and plundered the sea, *(Refrain)*
4. Let there be beauty and let there be air
fragrant with peace, never poisoned with fear,
freed from the plagues of pollution and war, *(Refrain)*
5. Life is a holy thing, life is a whole,
linking each creature and blessing us all,
making connections of body and soul. *(Refrain)*

(Words © 1992 Hope Publishing Company)

Prayer for Centring and Renewal

We come, O Christ, with illusions of wealth

And you show us true treasure

We come with hands full of things but hearts that ache

And you show us true treasure

We come ignoring those outside our gate

And you show us true treasure

We come yearning for lives that matter

And you show us true treasure

We come tired of hoarding and striving

And you show us true treasure

We come to listen, even when it's hard

And you show us true treasure

We come, not to justify ourselves, but to be changed

And you show us true treasure.

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

(Lyrics: Richard Gillard and John Smith, Arr. Guy 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

(Music © West Wind Music)

Scripture Readings *(New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised)*

Our first scripture reading this morning comes from the first letter to Timothy. Most scholars think this letter was written, in the name of Paul, but by someone living early in the second century, as the church was adapting to life in the Roman empire. This is the first of three letters, or epistles, in the New Testament, known as the Pastoral epistles, because they are addressed to two early church leaders as pastors or shepherds, and they are about pastoral issues. In today's case, attitudes to wealth and the care of others.

1 Timothy 6:6-19

⁶ Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; ⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; ⁸ but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. ⁹ But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

The Good Fight of Faith

¹¹ But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

¹³ In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you ¹⁴ to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. ¹⁶ It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honour and eternal dominion. Amen.

¹⁷ As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, ¹⁹ thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

Our second scripture reading this morning is from the gospel of Luke. We used to think this was most likely written in the late eighties or the nineties of the first century like the gospel of Matthew, but more recent scholarship has suggested it was written a decade or two later as it emphasises the rejection of Jesus by the “Jews”, reflecting the later period when the followers of Jesus were being gradually expelled from the Jewish synagogues. In this reading we again hear the theme of the tension between loving wealth and care of those in need as it is reflected in the story of a wealthy man and the beggar Lazarus.

Luke 16:19-31 The Rich Man and Lazarus

¹⁹ ‘There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. ²⁰ And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, ²¹ who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. ²² The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ He called out, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.” ²⁵ But Abraham said, “Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. ²⁶ Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.”

²⁷ He said, “Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house— ²⁸ for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.” ²⁹ Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.” ³⁰ He said, “No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.” ³¹ He said to him, “If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.””

Hymn HIOS 15: Christ Has Changed The World’s Direction

(Lyrics: Shirley Murray Tune: Barry Brinson)

1. Christ has changed the world’s direction!
Christ can change the human heart:
agents of the new creation
mend the people torn apart;
so are we
charged to be
go-betweens for unity.

2. Peace will be our way of thinking:
common wealth and common state.
Gone the wounds, the words and weapons
that conspire to hurt and hate,
and no power
shall devour
earth or air where peace might flower.

3. Debts and doubts will be forgiven,
cancelled in the name of God,
olive trees again be planted
there where soldiers' boots have trod,
hunger fed,
terror fled,
justice shining in its stead.

4. What have we as commendation,
sent to speak, as speak we must?
Love will be our global language,
hands an enemy can trust,
faith to faith,
race with race,
all shall find a meeting place.

5. Envoys of a High Commission,
gifts of hope we find to share,
Christ the Spirit reconciling,
Christ our internet of care.
Though we stall,
fail or fall,
shall we now refuse God's call?

(Words © 2001 Hope Publishing Company)

Food for Thought

Cosmos Sunday, the fourth and last Sunday in the Season of Creation. Cosmos is a Greek word meaning the whole world, the total universe, everything that exists, all humankind. As some of you may know, I have been studying Greek this year. The word Cosmos also carries an idea or hint of order or harmony.

So, the universe is seen, in Greek, as a place of predictability and music, an unchanging place in which you can relax and be at peace. It is God's realm, beyond being troubled by anything humankind can mess with.

As I reflected on today's readings, and the theme of, "the Cosmos", I wondered, how are these connected? When you look up at the night sky, especially from somewhere out of the city, like at Ruakaka, or up in the mountains of the South Island, there seem to be so many stars, and they are so bright. A truly awe-inspiring sight that can take your breath away. That's the Cosmos. The vast untrammelled space of space. For the Greeks, that was where the gods lived, in serene indifference to the troubled, change-ridden, lives of the little humans on Earth. For Jews and Christians however, God is the Creator of both the vast arena of space, and each troubled human life is a spark of His life too.

So, when we look out to the heavens, and contemplate the universe, as we know it, what do we see as the nature of the God of this Cosmos? As I looked at some of the pictures sent back by the James Webb space telescope, what struck me was the incredible vastness of space, and how the whole is lit up by these tiny sparks of light, yet a moment later, and I realised, each tiny spark is a massive star, many of them thousands of times bigger even than our own sun. This Cosmos is HUGE. And throughout it the myriads of stars pour forth unending streams of light, just cast off into space, poured out unceasingly, in uncountable numbers of photons a second, spreading through the universe, and on and on in time. We can look back in time with our telescopes because the light just reaching us now was shot off in our direction millions of years ago, and has only just got here.

Light from the sun takes only eight minutes to get to Earth, and that's about 93 million miles or 150 million kilometres away. Can you imagine just how big our universe is if light travelling at about 300,000 km /sec. takes millions, or even billions, of years to get here?

And all of this light comes at no charge! We don't have to pay for a single photon. It is all given for us to enjoy and use as we will, for nothing. The God of this universe is no businessman, ensuring that he extracts due profit for every spark. No! the God of this universe is a master of generosity, and we are made in his image, at our most natural and healthy when we too are generous. Just as God pours his light into space, wherever it may find a darkness to fill, so we are called to give, into whatever emptiness we can find. God does not hold back from giving love and care, regardless of whether we deserve it or not, that's his nature, just like the sun does not hold back from shining, regardless of whether the darkness of space is ready to receive it or not. The light just charges on into space, coming ready or not, at three hundred thousand kilometres a second.

The author of the letter to Timothy picks up this idea of, how to be like God, or show godliness, saying to him, “Of course, there is great gain in godliness.” Contrasting it with, “But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.”

Let’s pause there and give that some thought. If you decided you wanted to be rich, what temptations might that trap you into? How might your behaviour change? What senseless and harmful desires might that plunge you into? What spiritual ruin and destruction might that lead you into? What sort of a person would you become? Does that person reflect the sort of person we see in Jesus?

To try to be rich you have to hold back from being generous, like God is, and keep the riches for yourself, like a star holding back all the light so it no longer shines. Can you imagine that? A selfish star? Well yes, they do happen, well sort of. They are called “Black Holes”, stars that have got so big their gravity, like selfishness, overwhelms their natural radiance, and all their light falls back into the hole; well nearly; that’s what Hawking radiation is, the light that even the most selfish gigantic stars in the universe can’t quite hold back and hug into themselves. They can’t completely stop being like their creator, and so even they do send their radiance out into space and eventually evaporate in self-giving. I think the most memorable phrase in today’s reading is, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil,”. How much evidence do we see of that biblical truth around us in the world today? Wherever we see people, “plunged into ruin and destruction” as the author of Timothy so graphically puts it, we see examples of the love of money at the root of it, in contrast to the generous self-giving which is the nature of God.

Luke gives us a picture of a black-hole person, opulent, dressed in the royal colour, purple, and fine linen, feasting sumptuously every day. Which sounds remarkably like a verbal description of the emperor, and at his gate, the destitute Lazarus. Now this name is interesting. It is the Latin form of the Jewish name Eleazar, meaning, “God has helped’ or “God is my Help”. This desperate, poor man, has nothing, and is totally dependent on the generosity of those around him, longing for ‘Trickle Down’ theory to work. It doesn’t, and he dies. Then the story depicts the judgement of God on these two men, who in life experienced such differences in wealth and opportunity.

Do I need to spell out the message any more clearly that the scriptures already do? As I said in the beginning for us wealthy people it can be hard to see our privilege and truly be humble. But each time you look up and see a star, I hope you will remember their challenge, to be generous like God is generous. The God, whose light shines on into the darkness, and the darkness has never understood it.

The selfish wealthy will never understand, but our challenge is to live this truth into the life of this world, to notice the poor at our gates and become generous like God is Generous. That's how we are called, through this gospel, to live, showing our membership in the Body of Christ, our citizenship in the Kingdom of God, and the reality of the Resurrection we celebrate in this communion service.

Community Time: Notices, Celebrations, Thanksgiving & Concerns

The Prayers of God's People

We pray now for ourselves and others:

For the peoples of the world,
in lands scarred by greed and divided by walls –
where some feast and others starve:

Light the way of justice, O God

For our nation and its leaders,
amidst wealth disparity and short-sighted policy –
may they listen to prophets and serve the common good:

Light the way of justice, O God

For your church, in every place,
that we may not pass by the Lazaruses at our gates,
but be communities of compassion and courage:

Light the way of justice, O God

For our neighbourhoods, towns, and homes,
that we may notice who is missing from the table,
and set another place for love:

Light the way of justice, O God

For those in pain or need,
those overlooked or overwhelmed,
may healing come through community and care:

Light the way of justice, O God

For all who have died,
and all who shine as stars in your presence,
may we walk in their light and learn their love:

Light the way of justice, O God. Amen.

Offering and Prayer of Dedication

Let us thank God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

**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 the good gifts we have received.**

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.”**

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

(Lyrics: John Ireland 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.

(Words © 1987 Hope Publishing Company)

Communion

**Holy and loving God for the power of love in human life and history we
give you thanks and praise. Amen.**

Long ago our ancestors knew love's power, and they became the tellers of love's tale. Love bound them in covenant, teaching them to live in community with compassion and concern for the poorest among them.

Yet centuries of domination and violence shaped a different kind of community based on selfishness and inequality.

In the struggle against oppression, Jesus became the face of love, showing us the way to abundant life. In word and deed, he announced love's new reign of justice, reconciliation and peace. Filled with the courage and passion of love's spirit he gave his life to challenge the unjust systems of this world.

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:

"Share this bread among you; this is my body which will be broken for justice. Do this to remember me."

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

"Share this wine among you; this is my blood which will be shed for liberation. Do this to remember me."

We set aside these elements to this holy purpose.

Let us pray.

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.

Amen.

When we eat this bread and drink from this cup, we open ourselves again to the loving presence of Jesus in our midst.

The table is ready. All are welcome. Come, for the feast is spread.

Let us pray:

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 the poor and outcast;

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.

The bread of life for all who hunger

The body of Christ, broken for us. *(eat together)*

The cup of compassion for a broken world

The blood of Christ shed for all. *(drink together)*

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 HFTC S.19: [Make Me A Channel Of Your Peace](#)

Commissioning and Blessing

Go now, members of the Body of Christ,

May peace be your way of thinking and living.

Where there is hatred bring love, where there is injury forgiveness,

Where there is despair, hope, where selfishness, trust and faith.

Become a channel through whom everyone will know the peace of God which passes all understanding.

He Manaakitanga

Benediction

Kia tau ki a tātou katoa

Te atawhai o tō tātou Ariki,

a Ihu Karaiti

Me te aroha o te Atua

Me te whiwhingatahitanga

Ki te wairua tapu

Ake, ake, ake

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,

and the love of God,

and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

be with you all

Forever and ever

Sung Amen (*Threefold*)

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