



# Kaurihohore Historic Church

P O Box 4118, Kamo, Whangārei 0141



## Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish Sunday 3 March 2024 – Lent 3

The service this morning is led by Rosalie Gwilliam.

### Welcome to Kaurihohore Historic Church

In working together on our shared mission, we commit to seven core values:

***Togetherness, Humility, Curiosity, Love, Inclusive, Justice, Sustainability.***

**Inclusive** : 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.

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

*We invite you to:*

*Join in the congregational responses printed in **Bold**.*

*Stand if you are able, for the hymns and the offering prayer*

**Welcome**

## **Meditation**

There is so much during the day that clamours for our attention. ....

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 their rest in you.**

**We pray in Jesus' name. Amen**

## **Song – 79 FFS** *please remain seated*

'Who will carry the cross with me?' asks the Christ, the Son of God.

'Who will carry the cross with me?' walk the way of love.

'Who will turn then and follow me?' asks the Christ, the Son of God.

'Who will turn then and follow me?' hear the call to come.

'Who will live every day through me?' asks the Christ, the Son of God.

'Who will live every day with me?' showing fruits of grace.

**Call to worship** from Psalm 19 The heavens declare God's glory.

**The skies proclaim God's works.**

God's instructions are trustworthy,  
**bringing joy to our hearts.**

May our words bring praise **as we come to worship God.**

### **Prayer**

Creator God, you call us from our busy lives to find knowledge and rest in this holy place.

Centre our spirits on your love.

Open our hearts to your transforming word, for we are ready to realign our spirits, remember your words, and walk in your paths. Guide us in wisdom and truth as we seek to follow your word. Amen

### [Hymn 28 HFTC Amazing Grace](#)

### **Prayer of centring and renewal**

Look at your hands. Rub them together. Blow your breath upon your hands. Take time to notice your hands, and all your body.

*A mystery and joy of our faith is this: we confess that in Christ we meet God in-a-body. We give the name Emmanuel, God-with-us, Word made flesh.*

Look at your hands. In Jesus, God has hands.

Look at your feet. In Jesus, God has feet.

Look around you. In Jesus, God has eyes.

Let this wash over you. In Jesus, we meet God-in-a-body. In Jesus God affirms the words spoken at creation: that the world is good, that bodies are good, and that God cares for created material things.

Gracious God, we are sorry for the times we have devalued the creation and the bodies you love. Help us to care for all created things including our neighbours and ourselves, honouring and valuing what you have made. In the name of Christ, the word-made-flesh, we pray. Amen

## Hymn HFTC 451 All my hope on God is founded

**Reflection and readings. Triple foolishness**      *Thanks to B D Prewer*      If you never want to look like a fool, then don't be a Christian, or at least don't make it obvious that you are one of Christ's believers. Christians are without a doubt very foolish people. That is how sophisticated people of the world will always see us. The foolishness we espouse is set out in three of the bible readings for this morning, the third Sunday in Lent: in Exodus, John's Gospel, and Paul's first letter to the church in Corinth. We will hear these three readings and take a look at what they each tell us.

### **Exodus 20: 1-17**

*Here is the foolishness of having high values.*

**Reflection** We don't take our spiritual and moral standards from the latest opinion polls but from what God has revealed to us as the only truly good life.

We

aim at a high standard. The world at large will never accept our values as the practical way to go. We have to go it alone and against the general flow. Isn't that patently ridiculous of us?

The world wonders 'why bother'. Keeping commandments pays no obvious reward. In fact, they may often disadvantage you. Take one example: 'Thou shall not covet.' How do you follow that line in a pervasive

culture that is based on consumerism? How can you take part in commerce if you don't want people to covet?

What is more, high standards like this will always make you look stupid because you will always fall short. The world settles for reasonable, comfortable, attainable standards. What is more, Christ takes us further than the 10 commandments; he sets the bar even higher.

It all seems like wasted idealism, destined to failure and guilt, increasing disillusionment and maybe cynicism. Yet to such idealism God calls us. One cannot hold the Biblical faith without taking on the apparent foolishness of its values.

For this the world either sniggers at us or turns its nose and totally ignores us.

## **John 2: 13-22**

*Here is the foolishness of tackling abuses and injustices.*

**Reflection** Jesus went for public protest. Jesus plaited a whip, and stormed amongst the stalls and money changers and created chaos! He drove out the traders along with the cattle and sheep.

What were the reasons for our Lord's drastic protest? Of this we cannot be certain. But three possibilities can be noted –

- Some think he was protesting against the whole temple cult of Sacrifices; the bringing of birds and animals for sacrificial offerings in an attempt to either please God or twist God's arm. If this was his reason he certainly stands in the tradition of many of the prophets of Israel. - Others believe that Jesus was protesting against the blatant rip-off that the market represented. The majority of the pilgrims were extremely poor people. Yet the priestly establishment rigged the system so that animals had to be brought to the temple market at fixed high prices if they were to pass inspection as unblemished offerings. Also high commission was charged on the exchange of Roman money for the temple coinage for the monetary offerings.

- There also are those who interpret the protest as stemming from Jesus' concern for Israel's mission to the world. The large outer court was the only place where non-Jews, the Gentiles, could attend. What went on there did not respect true piety but was just another noisy market. Maybe Jesus was furious at this bad example to the Gentiles.

Whatever the reason or reasons, the obvious question is; Was it worth it?

What did he achieve besides making himself hated and marked for elimination by vested interests?

Wasn't this protest really a futile gesture? An absurdity? The next day it would be business as usual.

So it is with many Christian's efforts when protesting against abuses and injustices. We believe that evangelism and social justice cannot be put asunder. We raise our voices, we join protests, we write letters to those in power, we do it again and again in our desire to reform society.

Sometimes we achieve a little. But usually our efforts often appear futile. It is business again the next day. All we seem to mostly achieve is to make ourselves look foolish.

Yet as followers of the Christ who threw his weight around the temple, we

cannot do anything less. We have a go. We leave the ultimate results in the hands of our hidden God. Again that looks stupid to the eyes of onlookers.

## **1 Corinthians 1: 22-25**

*Here is the foolishness of allowing yourself to be expendable.*

### **Reflection**

Looking at his life superficially, what did Jesus achieve except to lose his life?

He was so young, so gifted, what a colossal waste. What a squandering of talent and opportunity.

The cross could have been avoided. He could have moderated his message a little, been more polite to those in power, and certainly he did not need to walk into the lion's den and challenge the priestly pride to do its worst.

He could have stayed in Galilee where he was safe. He could have gone away with the Greeks who came asking for him in the final days. He could have gone overseas, written a book, made sure his teaching was unequivocally set down in ink, and his deeds recorded in an authorised biography. Would not that have saved later scholars a lot of conjecture and misunderstanding?

But no, he did the foolish thing and willingly allowed his enemies to triumph over him. Does it make sense? The end result of his turning the other cheek and going the second mile was that they nailed him on a cross. Futile? Stupid? Pathetically absurd?

However, we Christians believe that the terrible Cross was the most wonderful, loving, history changing event in all history. And we believe that the resurrection was not a reversal of the cross but god's seal of approval on it. From the worlds view, we are now fools of that winsome fool, Jesus of Nazareth. For talk of the cross sounds absurd and to be on a path of self- destruction, but for us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

## **The triple foolishness**

So there we have it. Triple foolishness.

1/ Nevertheless (praise God) the fools of the loving fool, Christ, will continue to aim for highest ethical and spiritual values. And whenever we fall short we know that we are forgiven and restored for another shot at the heights. We are the lucky ones who can dare to aim high without the factor of fear or despair at failure

2/ The fools of that fool Christ will continue to try to change things in society. That will lobby and protest, make a nuisance of themselves and refuse to be intimidated. For we know that no effort we make will be wasted within the hidden management of the kingdom of God.

3/ The fools of that fool, Christ, will persist in trusting the cross as the pivotal moment in history, the point where God is closest to us with saving grace. Against all the world's futile exercise and praise of power, we know that there is more power in that loving man on the cross than anywhere else.

Fellow fools, whenever it is God's precious brand of foolishness we espouse (in contrast to our own cheap brands) there is nothing to fear and nothing to lose. Live, love, laugh and be happy, for you have every right to do so.

[Hymn 430 TIS Your words to me are life and health tune Winchester Old](#)

## **Community time**

### **Prayer for others**

Let us pray for the world that God created and loves.

Creator God, we give thanks that you meet us in the world. Help us to see you, even in places that shock and surprise.

We pray for the sick and dying

*Silence*

We pray for those impacted by war, and those imprisoned. *Silence*

We pray for the lonely and broken-hearted

*Silence*

We pray for endangered animals and plants

*Silence*

We pray for all who are marginalised, or experience discrimination.

*Silence*

We pray for all those we love and pray for today *Silence*

We pray that we would work for justice in your world, as we follow after Jesus. Amen

**Offering dedication (Exodus 20)**

**Holy One, you shape our lives with great beauty, showing us paths that lead to righteousness and blessing.**

**We bring these gifts with grateful hearts, that you may use them to build your community of justice and righteousness.**

**We offer you our very lives knowing that you will lead us in the path of holy service. Amen.**

**Hymn 422 TIS Come, Holy Spirit, come! [tune Diademata](#)**

**Benediction.**

God's foolishness is wiser than we will ever know, and God's weakness is stronger than anything we can imagine.

Go forth with joyful hearts in the foolishness and weakness of God.

Go to be a blessing to creation.

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

**Sung Amen**