



# Kaurihohore Historic Church

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## Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish

**Sunday 6 April 2025 – Lent 5**

Today's service has been prepared by Eleanor Ashby,  
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.***

**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**

#### **Call to Worship:** *(based on Psalm 126)*

Let us begin this day by rejoicing!  
The Lord has done such wonderful things for us.  
Let us be glad!  
The day before us is uncertain.  
We know not what we will encounter on our way.  
Wherever we go, we go forth as people of the living God,  
And we go forth to touch the lives of all with his healing touch.  
Let us begin this day with rejoicing!  
and return to our homes with gladness!

### **Prayer:**

We praise and adore you, O God, for giving us reason to sing aloud with joy.  
The Psalmist wrote about a joyous future and the prophet Isaiah beseeches us not to dwell on things past, but to concentrate on the new thing that you have planned for us.

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

A new thing greater than any could imagine, when you entered our history in the person of Jesus Christ. A costly act which transformed the future forever. As we draw nearer to the events which led up to the death of Jesus, we marvel that through even that dreadful act you turn our weeping into shouts of joy and point us toward a new future through the glory of the resurrection. Accept our prayers and praises we pray, for we utter them in joyful thanksgiving for all the great things you have done for us - especially for the great gift of Jesus, our Lord and our Saviour, in whose name we pray. Amen

**Hymn:** [Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness](#) WOV 382

### **Lenten Liturgy:**

When we arrived this morning, we entered into the normal bustle of a church on a Sunday morning: friends greeting each other, children bringing their energy and enthusiasm. Now that we are sitting together in the pews, I invite you to close your eyes . . . and consider the word, "sanctuary." A sanctuary is a place set aside for sacred things. It is a place of refuge and protection. This room is a sanctuary. The season of Lent is a kind of sanctuary, extended in time. And one of the things Lent teaches is that you, too, are a sanctuary. There is inside you a place for sacred things, a place where God abides.

*(Silent time.)*

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of war and oppression in the world.

*(A candle is extinguished.)*

Let us pray: Loving God, we open our hearts to you. We invite you into our inmost being, only to find you already there. Strengthen us in our quiet places and then lead us into the work of justice and peace. Amen.

### **Centring Prayer: Because**

Because we have preserved our joy in manna jars  
for the long winter of despair,

storing them in the dark corners of our souls,  
we have forgotten its gritty taste;

Because we have put a tight lid on our joy,  
and put it in the back of the pantry,

we have forgotten how it can tickle our noses;

Because we are so busy prattling pious platitudes  
about the poor, the least, the lost,

we ignore your words which anoint them as your children;

Because we have put up the shutters and storm doors  
to keep your future from sneaking in,  
we have missed the sweet breeze carrying your hope to us;  
Because we are who we are, restore us, Holy Grace,  
and make us a fragrant offering to the world.  
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

**Readings:**

Isaiah 43: 16-21

(p.1128)

John 12: 1-8

(p.1671)

**Hymn:** [Jesus Shall Reign](#)

HFTC 516

**Reflection:**

"If you don't survive this...I want you to know I love you." Mary isn't going to save her love for later.

The cost of loving Jesus... starts right now. In a week his life will hang in the balance and Mary knows it...and so does everyone else in the room.

And so, with her hands and her hair...and with the very expensive perfume she and her sister have saved for Jesus' burial, Mary tells Jesus by her actions...  
"If you don't survive the next few weeks, I want you to know I love you and I want you to know it now!"

Mary shows Jesus costly, extravagant wasteful love...the kind of love the father showed in the parable of the prodigal son. And costly love is the kind of love Jesus will show during his last days in Jerusalem, and it's the same kind of love Jesus asks his followers to show. Love that costs and extends us for the sake of another.

Children know this intuitively, don't they. I was charmed by how children in another church answered their minister when they were asked what love looks like...

One eight-year-old replied right away...

Well, when my nanna gets all stiff and sore and can't bend over to paint her toenails anymore, my grandpa does it for her. I think that's what love is.

OR a six-year-old says "Love is when you give somebody most of your chips without making them give you any of theirs."

Another child says: "Love is what makes daddy smile when he's tired." And another... when mummy makes coffee for daddy and takes a sip of it first to make sure it tastes OK."

Or how about this one... "Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas when you stop opening your presents and just look around."

Another eight-year-old showed wisdom beyond his age when he said... "If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend you hate,"

Or how about "Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they've known each other a very long time."

But the very best example I heard of a child's intuitive understanding of love was this one:

It's the story of a four-year old whose eighty-year-old neighbour recently lost his wife. When the little boy saw the man sitting outside crying in his garden, he ran across the boundary... and climbed into the old man's lap, and just sat there quietly.

All the while his mum is watching out the kitchen window. When the little boy comes back home his mother asks him what he and the neighbour talked about.

"Oh, we didn't talk about anything" said the little boy, "I just helped him cry"

And on Jesus last journey to Jerusalem in our Bible story today, you could say Mary is helping Jesus' cry.

Mary is beginning to engage in the grief process they will all almost certainly face in just a couple of weeks, because they love Jesus.

And it costs her. She's willing to pour out all her perfume, willing to risk the ridicule of Judas, before it's too late to let Jesus know how much she loves him...

You see the nard Mary uses to anoint Jesus' feet isn't just some ten-dollar pot from the Body Shop. In first century Judea...Nard was a rare and expensive perfume imported from India.

In Mary's culture and tradition, nard is associated with the grief of love and with death. Remember how after the crucifixion, Nicodemus will bring spices for Jesus' burial and how the women come the next day, to anoint Jesus body again. And all this fits together subtly of course because Jesus is also the anointed one of God...

The Greek word *Christos*... means the anointed one. The Hebrew word Messiah means the anointed one.

The story of a woman anointing Jesus is embedded in every gospel account of Jesus suffering and death. And in Mark, Jesus tells us people will always remember her for this. And so, we do.

We tend to remember costly love like this...if we notice it.... And the physical and emotional and spiritual suffering we endure when we love this way costs us - doesn't it.

It's the pain of inexhaustible love... shown in the story of the prodigal son...in the energy and exhaustion

the huge effort the shepherd expends to find his lost sheep.

It's Jesus' mother's anguish and grief as she weeps at the foot of the cross.

When you and I are sitting with a loved one who is dying, or looking for a lost child perhaps, my guess is we're unlikely to care whether anyone points out what a waste of our time it is...or argue the way Judas did... about the practicality of loving this way...

My sister-in-law, Diane, talks about how there was a time, maybe twenty years ago, when people in her church in Wanaka would argue about showing costly love to their community...why feed the skiers and snowboarders... even... why feed the College girls after school...why charge so little for funerals for those who don't come to church.

Judas' complained to Mary. Why waste good burial oil on the living.

But what if Mary had stopped right there and embarrassed, apologized and put the Nard away for later?

It seems to me that if Mary had paid attention to Judas, we would all have lost a teaching that is at the very centre of our faith.

It's a teaching that illustrates Jesus' command to love one another as he loved us and what's more, to take this commandment to the ends of the earth. As Jesus showed us, loving as he loved, as God loves, always was, is, and will be costly. Not the emotion of loving, but the follow through, in the costly life of loving,

As Christ's Body through the power of the Holy Spirit we are called to this costly kind love.

This costly love is what it means to be a Christian... what it means to be in a committed relationship,

first with Jesus Christ, in true devotion, honouring him with our lives and by pouring ourselves out for one another and for the world he came to save in costly love.

**Offering and Offertory Prayer:**

**Gracious God, we respond to your great gifts to us by offering these gifts to you. Gifts of money, of time and talents, the gift of our lives. May they declare your praise in ways which sweeten lives with the love of Christ. Amen**

**Community Time:**

**Prayer for Others**

Everlasting God, you call us to your service, and so we ask that you make us worthy of your calling; and to hear us as we intercede and give thanks to you through Jesus Christ your Son.

Creator God, we pray for the nations of the world and for their right dealing one with another, especially between Russia and Ukraine; and, between Israel and Hamas where we pray for a cessation of hostilities and a declaration of peace. May barriers of race, creed, gender and colour be broken down, and political freedom established where there is oppression and suppression of new ideas.

We also remember to people of Myanmar and Thailand as they deal with the aftermath of the earthquake that caused so much trauma.

We pray for educational development and for a more just economic structure which pays people fairly for their labour.

Father God, we thank you that no matter how widely spread throughout the world our families may be, our hearts may be joined together in prayer. We also thank you for the means of modern technological communication that enable us to keep so closely in touch with those we love, which means we not only hear our loved ones but also see them.

Gracious God, look mercifully upon those whose lives have been shattered by illness. Help them and those who care for them to be freed from resentment and give them the strength to seek your will, whatever it might be, in every situation.

Eternal God, giver of love and power, your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world to preach the gospel of his kingdom: help us to live the good news we proclaim in all that we do and say. Merciful father: accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus. Amen

## **Benediction**

Go into this week  
blessed by the righteousness and love of God  
and empowered by the Holy Spirit  
to spread the fragrance of Christ wherever you go.  
And may God's perfect word revive your soul;  
May Christ Jesus be your saviour and your rock;  
And may the Holy Spirit strengthen you to press ever onward.

**We go in peace to love and serve the Lord, Amen.**