



KAURIHOHORE / KAMO CO-OPERATING PARISH

kaurichurch.methodist.org.nz

kaurichurch@gmail.com

(09) 946 0813

59 Apotu Road, Kauri Hohore



Sunday 12 October 2025 – Pentecost 18

The service today 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.

Love: we are committed to selfless love to all, including those marginalised by society and the wider church.

Welcome

Call to Worship:

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Are any among you suffering?

Then let us pray.

Are any cheerful?

Then let us sing songs of praise.

Are any among you sick?

Then let us turn to each other for God's healing touch.

The prayer of faith will save us

And God will lift us up.

Hymn HFTC 40: [Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation](#)

Prayer:

Eternal God - you who possess all power in heaven and earth - care for us. The immensity of such blessing is almost too much for us to grasp. With all the breath and life within us, we come with praises before you, O God. The experience of your goodness and mercy gives us fresh confidence to face the present and the future, knowing that they, and we, are in your hands.

Gladly, O God, we adore you and praise you forever. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Hymn HFTC S.5: [Father, We Adore You](#) (*Sung as a round*)

Centering Prayer

O God,
When nothing is right, when we are weary and lost, when clouds dull the sky,
help us to be still.

When our cries are unheeded, when no effort bears fruit, when the sun sets,
help us to be still.

When love is over, when hope is gone, when darkness covers the land,
help us to be still.

For in being still, in refusing to panic or despair, we shall come to know that you, O God, are there, suffering alongside and with us, waiting to show us stepping-stones through the swirling waters, and to help us sing a new song.

We thank you and praise you in Jesus' name. Amen

Readings

James 5:13-20

(p. 1884)

Mark 9:38-50

(p. 1573)

Reflection

Listen again to the words of James in today's epistle reading "Are any among you suffering? They should pray." These words reminded the late Rev. Moira Lidlow of a very special time when James would perhaps have extolled a whole congregation for their behaviour.

This happened during a Maundy Thursday service some years ago - when a whole congregation experienced a deep sense of the Holy. Mind you, the 'whole' congregation in this rural church on a cool Thursday evening only consisted of about a dozen people.

A dozen faithful people. The liturgy was the normal Maundy Thursday one, which included prayers, singing a few hymns, sharing in Holy Communion, and extinguishing the candles in the Tenebrae part of the service. It is always a moving service and people leave quietly when it is over.

However, on this occasion, as people were leaving after the service, a woman was arriving. Part of a farming family and a faithful member of this church, she lived quite a distance away and had to drive along dusty, unmade dirt roads to reach the church. Everyone knew that her teenage son, Glenn, was dying with cancer at the time. She was heard to say to those outside that she must have got the time wrong, and someone replied, "No, no, you're just in time," and with that, the whole congregation turned around, came back in, and took their seats.

The glasses were refilled, the remains of the broken loaf rescued, the candles relit, and the service repeated.

The first time, the service had been meaningful, the second time, it was unforgettable. The same prayers and the same hymns and the sharing again in the Lord's Supper was just different. There was an awareness of a deep sense of the holiness – the sacredness - of the occasion – the service seemed to take on a life of its own. Moira always believed that the breath of the Spirit infused and inspired anew the words of the liturgy, the prayers, the singing, the awful extinguishing of the candles. The entire service really became a prayer for the church community and especially for the suffering woman, her son and their whole family. It felt as though the service had become their actual attendance at Jesus' last supper with his disciples.

So, what difference did this all make to a suffering family and church community? Glenn still died a couple of months later – the family and everyone else involved all grieved his loss, but having entered into the passion of Christ in such a personal way, there was a difference in speaking of resurrection – it took on a more personal dimension. Words about resurrection and life spoke to broken hearts, and were not only heard, but experienced as genuine words of hope.

William Barclay in his commentary on John's gospel wrote about such experience. "It is easy to sit in discussion groups, to sit in a study and read books, it is easy to discuss the intellectual truth of Christianity; but the essential thing is to experience the power of Christianity. And it is fatally easy to start at the wrong end. It is fatally easy to think of Christianity as something to be discussed and not as something to be experienced. It is certainly important to have an intellectual grasp of the orb of Christian truth; but it is still more important to have a vital, living experience of the power of Jesus Christ." ¹

Is anyone suffering? Pray. It seems so simple, but unfortunately, we've often turned the simplicity into a cliché. "Just pray about it," sometimes is not actually a call to get on our knees and come before the holy God.

We can treat it like a magic trick, or come to God as if he's Santa Claus. Or, we can flippantly say, "I'll just pray about it," as an excuse to avoid doing the hard things we need to do as we live out our faith. But we know that, as James has given us very practical commands for living as a Christian, true prayer is not a means to get us off the hook from *doing*.

Prayer is an essential part of the *doing*. They can't be separated. We can't do what God wants us to do without continually coming to him in prayer, and if we're truly communing with the holy God, our prayer life will fuel us for doing the work he's called us to in the rest of our lives. Being doers of the word requires that we also be people of prayer.

The other relevant opening words from James are about singing "Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise." Of course, this really resonates with me. Singing as I do in three different choirs, one of which is committed to singing only Spirit based music, I have learnt that singing does indeed keep me cheerful.

The early church was a singing church – always ready to burst into song. There was a joy in their hearts which emerged in songs of praise for the grace and mercy of God. And in the Christian church, from the beginning until now, there has been the music of songs of praise, for the Christian's joy is based on love.

James would have agreed with a sign in a cathedral in America, which reads "The one who sings, prays twice." ²

Wendy Wright in an article entitled 'Sing to the Lord a New Song' wrote that "singing is one medium through which our hearts and minds are formed. It is one very powerful way in which we become re-made in the image of God, one way in which the Christ story enters our lives and become the narrative through which our own stories unfold. To truly sing a new song to the Lord is to open ourselves to transformation of the most profound sort."

Haven't we all experienced this at one time or another – whether it is singing as part of a huge gathering or as a small struggling church congregation, being transported by the singing, as the Christ story enters our hearts and the Word is sung through us. At times like that we can feel embraced by God's joy and swept into the passion of God's power and purpose far beyond our own personal limits.

That power and purpose sends us out, not only to sing the Word, but to be proclaimers of the Word in our communities. Jesus teaches us how best to do that in today's gospel.

In the verses just before this morning's reading, Mark wrote about an incident in which the disciples argued about who was greatest among them. Jesus took a small child in his arms as a lesson in humility to the status seeking disciples. This seemed to be completely lost on them because in today's verses we have John acting as a spokesman for the others as he congratulates himself and them for rebuking a man who was healing in the name of Jesus.

When John said he ‘was not one of us,’ we can almost hear the resignation in Jesus’ voice as he says ‘do not stop him’ for he that is not against you is for you.’ The response that Jesus’ demands, starts where the pain is – surely a reminder for us also.

Jesus then goes on to critique those who cause others to stumble, to sin, in the strongest possible terms. So – what does all that mean to us if we really desire to be disciples of Christ – proclaimers of the Word in our communities. It means that in the face of life’s serious conflicts and challenges, in the face of life’s pain and its joys, we need to believe that the gospel shapes the disciple. At the heart of our discipleship has to be a willingness to live the gospel, to transfer its meaning and its demands into the day-by-day situations of our current existence.

There is no way we can do this on our own, but we can sing and proclaim the Word through us, empowered with the life of the risen Christ within us, the Holy Spirit.

Hymn: I, the Lord of Sea and Sky

(Here I am, Lord)

1. I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard My people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin My hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear My light to them – whom shall I send?

Chorus:

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if You lead me;
I will hold Your people in my heart.*

2. I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne My people’s pain.
I have wept for love of them; they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
Give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak My Word to them – whom shall I send?

Chorus:

3. I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them; My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide,
Till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give My life to them – whom shall I send?

Chorus:

Offertory Prayer:

Bless these gifts, O God, for we offer them and our lives to be used to proclaim the good news of Jesus in ways that empower people's lives. May our faith be so evident through our deeds and our words that others are brought to faith and lives are transformed. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen

Community Time:

Prayer for Others:

Father God, you are a God of compassion and love.
Time after time we have experienced your care and provision.
Time after time, You've answered our prayers and met our needs—
often in ways we could never have dreamed possible.
We praise You for Your faithful love toward us.
Because we have known Your love, we come to You with confidence,
offering our prayers for the world that You love.
We see so much pain and suffering;
so much anger and frustration and despair.
It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the needs around us.
But we continue to bring our prayers to You in faith,
because we know that nothing is impossible for You.
You are the God who rained down bread from heaven,
and made water flow from a rock in the desert;
the God who resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead,
and who brings new life and hope to all who believe.
Because nothing is impossible for You, O God,

hear our prayer, and in Your love, answer.

We pray for those suffering the effects of recent natural disasters....
We pray for the regions of our world caught up in violence and threats of violence:
Because nothing is impossible for You, O God,

hear our prayer, and in Your love, answer.

We pray for those who live with serious illness,
those with chronic pain,
those without access to proper medical care,
those for whom treatment is no longer an option.
Because nothing is impossible for You, O God,

hear our prayer, and in Your love, answer.

Merciful God,
You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, to show us a different way to live—
the way of deep humility and obedience.
You've called us to love one another,
and to work together with one heart and mind,
balancing our needs with the needs of those around us.

Give us courage to follow faithfully, and with integrity—
with actions that bear witness to the words we speak,
and worship that overflows into our daily tasks and relationships—
so that our lives will bring glory and honour to You,
our Redeemer and Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn: [You Shall Go Out With Joy!](#)

Video

Blessing:

Go, with joy in your hearts,
blessed by the unlimited grace of God,
the unconditional love of Jesus Christ,
and the unquenchable flame of the Holy Spirit.

Threefold Amen.

*Hymns reproduced with permission under
CCLI Music Reproduction Licence 221450)*