



# KAURIHOHORE / KAMO CO-OPERATING PARISH

[kaurichurch.methodist.org.nz](http://kaurichurch.methodist.org.nz)

[kaurichurch@gmail.com](mailto:kaurichurch@gmail.com)

(09) 946 0813

59 Apotu Road, Kaurihohore



## Sunday 16 November 2025 – Pentecost 23

The service today has been prepared by  
Kimberley Nielsen, 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.

**Community time** during the service is a good opportunity to ask for prayers for yourself or others.

If you, or someone you know, would appreciate a visit from one of our **Pastoral Network Team**, please speak to the service leader.

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

*You are invited to share in reading aloud the responses in **Bold Type**.*

## Welcome

### Call to Worship

God is creating new heavens and a new earth;

**the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.**

Be glad and rejoice forever in what God is creating;

**for God is creating the world as a joy,**

and its people as a delight.

**Come, let us worship together.**

*(Source: Liturgy, Learning, & (Purposeful) Life)*

### Opening Prayer

God, who is faithful

When all the foundations crumble:

As holy places fall

And nations stumble,

Give us the conviction

To bear witness to love,

Whatever the cost;

Through Jesus Christ, the Word and Wisdom of God.

Amen.

*(Source: Prayers for an Inclusive Church, Steven Shakespeare)*

Hymn HFTC 260: [Great is Your Faithfulness](#)

## Prayer of Trust

Will you trust God in times of personal trial and difficulty?

**We will trust God.**

Will you trust God when trouble comes without any warning?

**We will trust God.**

Will you trust God when a good friend lets you down?

**We will trust God.**

Will you trust God when you let a good friend down?

**We will trust God.**

Will you trust God when you are uncertain of your life's direction?

**We will trust God.**

Will you trust God when the international scene is stormy?

**We will trust God.**

*(Time of silent reflection)*

## An Assurance That We Can Always Trust God

Reliable when others are not,  
there for you when loved ones let you down,  
the voice of peace in conflict,  
the gentle compassionate presence,  
the calming influence where there is anger and resentment,

**God is to be heeded. God is to be trusted. We will trust God.  
Amen**

*(Source: Responsive Prayers, Year C, David Sparks)*

Hymn HFTC s.19: [Make Me a Channel of Your Peace](#)

Reading – Luke 21:5-19, The Message

<sup>5-6</sup> One day people were standing around talking about the Temple, remarking how beautiful it was, the splendour of its stonework and memorial gifts. Jesus said, “All this you’re admiring so much—the time is coming when every stone in that building will end up in a heap of rubble.”

<sup>7</sup> They asked him, “Teacher, when is this going to happen? What clue will we get that it’s about to take place?”

<sup>8-9</sup> He said, “Watch out for the doomsday deceivers. Many leaders are going to show up with forged identities claiming, ‘I’m the One,’ or, ‘The end is near.’ Don’t fall for any of that. When you hear of wars and uprisings, keep your head and don’t panic. This is routine history and no sign of the end.”

<sup>10-11</sup> He went on, “Nation will fight nation and ruler fight ruler, over and over. Huge earthquakes will occur in various places. There will be famines. You’ll think at times that the very sky is falling.

<sup>12-15</sup> “But before any of this happens, they’ll arrest you, hunt you down, and drag you to court and jail. It will go from bad to worse, dog-eat-dog, everyone at your throat because you carry my name. You’ll end up on the witness stand, called to testify. Make up your mind right now not to worry about it. I’ll give you the words and wisdom that will reduce all your accusers to stammers and stutters.

<sup>16-19</sup> “You’ll even be turned in by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends. Some of you will be killed. There’s no telling who will hate you because of me. Even so, every detail of your body and soul — even the hairs of your head! — is in my care; nothing of you will be lost. Staying with it — that’s what is required. Stay with it to the end. You won’t be sorry; you’ll be saved.

## **Reflection**

It’s hard to overstate the importance of the Jerusalem temple to first century Jews. It was a source of both national and religious pride, the place where heaven met earth, where it was believed God dwelt among God’s people, and the focal point of every aspect of Jewish national life. It combined religious and political functions, in addition to serving as the economic and financial hub of the Jewish world. The temple was the only reason to visit Jerusalem in the first century. It dominated the city, taking up a quarter of the city’s area.

Jerusalem was not so much a city with a temple, but a temple with a small city built around it.

The history of the temple in Jerusalem is long – King Solomon built the first temple around 1000 BCE, and it was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BCE. A second temple was then built in 507 BCE (with permission from the ruling Persians) and it continued to serve the Jewish population (although not without conflict) for centuries, right up until Herod the Great is made de-facto King of the region in around 37 BCE. In an effort to get the local Jewish population to like him and accept him as their leader, Herod promises to undertake a major renovation and expansion of the temple.

There's a lot to not like about Herod – he shows up in the Christmas story as a man so desperate to hold on to power, that after hearing rumours of the birth of a new Jewish king, he orders the murder of 1,000's of Jewish baby boys – but he was raised Jewish himself, so he knows the significance of the temple, and treats the renovation of it with the seriousness it deserves.

He promises that work will not begin on this new temple until everything is ready; he doubles the size of the outer courtyard, to accommodate the crowds; and he has 1,000 priests trained as stonemasons and builders so they can renovate the parts of the temple that only priests are allowed to enter. By all accounts, they do an incredible job. First century historian, Josephus, says that the construction of the temple itself took 18 months, while the porticoes and outer walls took another 8 years. The main structures were largely completed during Herod's reign, but construction at the complex continued for decades, meaning that it's likely the renovations were still going on during Jesus' visit in our reading this morning.

Both Rabbinic tradition and Josephus say that it's believed the renovations had divine approval. There's a quote from the Babylonian Talmud, *"And thus we have from the days of Herod, that when they were working on the construction of the Temple, rains*

*would fall at night. On the morrow, the winds would blow and the clouds dispersed and the sun would shine and the people would proceed with their work, and they knew that they were doing God's work."*

Despite this, there was still some upset about the renovations – Herod builds a massive roman fortress, Fortress Antonia, at the end of the temple complex (*show picture*). He also places a large golden eagle statue just outside the main gate, to remind people that Rome is still in charge. Worst of all, the temple, the building believed to be a replica of the heavenly holy of holies, the place where it was believed that God dwelt among God's people, was now colloquially known as "Herod's Temple." This must have been a slap in the face for the Jewish people! But for Jesus to predict the destruction of this temple is unthinkable, especially since the renovations weren't even finished yet!

By 80 AD, the time when Lukes Gospel is thought to have been written, the temple is already in ruins thanks to an uprising 10 years earlier. And it's never been rebuilt. The site has been home to an Islamic shrine, the Dome of the Rock, since 685.

All this talk about the temple being destroyed freaks the disciples out and they ask Jesus when this is going to happen, and what signs will there be that this is coming. Jesus tells them to look out for people spreading misinformation and claiming to be him. He says there'll be wars and insurrections, earthquakes, famine and plagues, and signs from heaven. But he says not to be afraid when you hear of these things, they're part of life, and aren't to be treated as signs and warnings. He also warns of persecution and betrayal because of his name, promising to give words and wisdom in this circumstance. Finishing with "not a hair on your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your souls."

Early hearers of this text will know that "not a hair on your head will perish" is hyperbolic – 100's, if not 1000's, of Christians were murdered by the Emperor Nero in 64 AD. These are people who are

very familiar the cost of following Jesus, and the gaining of your soul is seen as being beyond this life.

Hispanic theologian Gilberto A Ruiz says, “The point is that when bad things happen — and they will — we should “not be terrified” (21:9) or follow anyone proclaiming these are signs of God’s judgment and the end (21:8). Instead, we should trust that God remains present in our lives.” He continues, “Despite its language and imagery of destruction, Luke 21:5-19 is ultimately a passage grounded in hope — in the hope that God remains present in the world and in one’s life even when things have gotten so bad that it feels like the world is closing in on us.”

Which has got me thinking - what are the “temples” in our lives? The things that hold prime position in our community, or in our church, or it might just whatever you hold nearest and dearest, the things that we can’t imagine life without. I’m not saying these are bad things. As I said earlier, the Jerusalem Temple held a very important position in the lives on first century Jews - it gave them connection to God! But, like the temples in our own lives, it was still only temporary.

So maybe this passage isn’t about the end of the world, instead, it’s about what we do when the thing that that we can’t imagine life without is destroyed. The temple was destroyed, but Judaism was not. Neither was Christianity. At this point, Judaism was already thousands of years old, by comparison Christianity was only 10’s of years old. There were people still alive with first-hand memories of Jesus. Christian theology was still being worked out – they were still piecing together the concept of trinity; still trying to figure out exactly what Jesus’ life and death achieved (we still haven’t reached total agreement on this one); the Nicean Creed, a declaration outlining the core beliefs of Christianity, was still 300 years away!

When your temple is destroyed - when you have to face the thing you thought would never happen, or the thing you thought might happen one day, but you just hoped was so much further away; when the temple of belief you have built is deconstructed brick by brick; when you’re let down by the system, or the institution you

thought would protect you – may you be comforted by in the knowledge that these things are not signs. Do not be afraid. Don't let anyone deceive you. When the time arises, take the chance to tell your story. As Paul's letter to the Romans (5:3-5) reminds us, "we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup> endurance produces character, and character produces hope. <sup>5</sup> Now this hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

Soon, we are going to listen to a song, 'Christ Still Rises'. Hymn writer David Bjorlin says:

In March of 2020, I, like everyone else, was sheltering in place as the COVID-19 pandemic descended on the globe. In the midst of so much fear and death, I wondered what songs our churches could sing in the coming Easter that would name this grief and pain while still proclaiming the hope of the Resurrection. It seemed that if the Resurrection was truly our central proclamation as Christians, it needed to be good news now more than ever. So the idea of naming and proclaiming Christ's Resurrection alongside and within our current reality turned into this hymn.

Whatever you're going through - whatever temples may lie in ruins, misinformation you may face, wars, insurrections, earthquakes, famines and plagues, or persecution – may you remember the source of our hope: a God who loved the world so much that God came to earth to live among God's creation; a God who came in the form of a tiny baby, a baby whose birth forced his parents to flee their homeland for his safety; a God who hung out with the outcasts and misfits of society, who, in human form, wept and lamented over the people and city he loved; a God who was killed by powerful people colluding with the state in an effort to silence him; a God who didn't stay dead.

Just like the early Christians, by your endurance you will gain your soul.

## **Video – Christ Still Rises (David Bjorlin)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hO6ldm11bAg>

1. Christ still rises when fear grips our city,  
when death takes no pity,  
when much is unknown.  
Christ still rises when friends are divided,  
when joy feels misguided,  
when we are alone.  
Christ still rises when churches are shuttered,  
when praises are muttered,  
when prayers go unsaid.  
Christ still rises when peace has all faded,  
when we are most jaded,  
when faith turns to dread,  
when faith turns to dread.

2. Christ still rises when we give to neighbours,  
when we share our labours,  
when strangers belong.  
Christ still rises when we come together,  
when love is our tether,  
when hope is our song.  
Christ still rises when grieving is ended,  
when bodies are mended,  
when beauty heals pain.  
Christ still rises when fear has retreated,  
when death is defeated  
and joy will remain,  
and joy will remain.

## **Offering Dedication**

Giver of all good gifts, take our offerings we have brought and take our lives, that we may be your peace, your joy, and your love in our community and in the world. Amen

## Video – Psalm 83, O God Do Not Be Silent

*(Wendall Kimbrough)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zmkzzh9IKI>

We are now heading into the part of our service where we pray on behalf of others. You might have noticed that we haven't had a Psalm reading this morning – the lectionary didn't actually list one for this week. I've been thinking a lot though about the siege of Jerusalem that Jesus predicts in our Luke passage, about the wars, famines, and natural disasters that he tells us will come, and I was reminded of a version of Psalm 83 that I heard a few years ago. In this Psalm, the psalmist pleads with God to not stand silently by while God's people are being harmed, urging God to rise up and act on their behalf, to bring justice to their situation. So, we are going to listen to 'O God do not be silent' – the words are in your service sheet if you want to follow along – and then we will pray our prayer of intercession.

1. O God, do not be silent  
O God, do not be still  
O God you can't stand by and watch  
While your children are killed

2. You heard the people screaming  
You heard the cries of pain  
You know the ones who made these plans  
You know they'll come again

3. O God be like the hurricane  
O God be like the storm  
O God of justice come like fire  
Do not let them escape

4. O God, do not be silent  
O God, do not be still  
O God you can't stand by and watch  
While your children are killed

## **Prayer for Others/Intercession**

For the peoples of the world, in places of conflict and collapse, where fear hardens hearts, and misinformation deepens division, may wisdom rise and justice take root.

**God, keep us faithful in uncertain times.**

For our country and its leaders, in times of inflation, debate, and distraction, may truth be spoken plainly and power held lightly.

**God, keep us faithful in uncertain times.**

For the church in every form and place, when numbers fall and anxiety grows, may we not cling to the past, but tend to the present with care.

**God, keep us faithful in uncertain times.**

For our local communities, where kindness is quiet and exhaustion runs deep, may we uplift one another, refusing to gossip or give up.

**God, keep us faithful in uncertain times.**

For those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit, for those facing grief, poverty, isolation, or fear – may they know companions on the way and the comfort of God's peace.

**God, keep us faithful in uncertain times.**

For those who have gone before us in faith, and for the cloud of witnesses who inspire us still – may we honour their legacy with action and hope.

**God, keep us faithful in uncertain times. Amen.**

*(Source: Philip Garside)*

## Hymn – When Our Lives Are Ruled By Fear

*(Protests of Praise; Tune: Hollingside)*

1. When our lives are ruled by fear  
and our churches choked by greed,  
when success becomes our goal  
and security our creed:

*Refrain:*

Let us brave the wilderness,  
dare to walk where few have trod,  
leaving safety's easy path,  
risking doubt and finding God.

2. When our faith erodes to facts,  
and our stories turn to rules,  
when the cruel are seen as wise,  
and the merciful called fools.

*Refrain*

3. When our families exclude  
And our doctrines still divide,  
when our tables feed the full  
and the hungry starve outside:

*Refrain*

4. When the road ahead is steep  
and our courage is so small,  
when we stumble at the start  
and are certain we will fall:

*Refrain*

## **Benediction**

Go now into a world that is beautiful and bruised.

Go bearing the work of love and the witness of grace.

Let your hands serve, your voice speak truth, and your heart be steady,  
even when the way is not.

By your endurance, you will gain your soul. Go in peace.

*(Source: Philip Garside)*

**Sung Amen x 3**

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