



# 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 18 January 2026 – Epiphany 2

Our Service today is led by  
Mike 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.***

**Curiosity:** we are committed to a life of learning, questioning, and exploring the mystery of God, Jesus, and the Bible.

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

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

**After the service you are invited to share in morning tea, either in the kitchen or on the deck.**

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

The psalmist reminds us that we can put our hope in God. In Psalm 40, we are told: God leaned down to me and listened to my cry for help. God lifted me out of the pit of death, out of the mud and filth, God set me on solid rock.

The psalmist reminds us that we can sing of God's wonders. In Psalm 40, we are told: God put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise. Oh God, I will tell the good news of your righteousness, I will declare your faithfulness and your salvation. Let your loving-kindness and faithfulness always protect me.

*Source: L3 — Liturgy, Learning, (Purposeful) Life*

### Opening Prayer

Creator God,  
as we gather together,  
may we remember all the times you have set our feet upon the rock.  
May we rejoice in the glories of each new day.  
May we sing a song of your faithfulness.

Creator God,  
as we gather this morning,  
may we bring our heartaches to lay at your feet.  
May we be gentle with tender hearts and bruised egos.  
May we share your love and mercy with all those you have sent along our path.

Creator God,  
may your glory and righteousness be known through us,  
today and every day. Amen.

*Source: L3 — Liturgy, Learning, (Purposeful) Life*

## **Hymn: Christ Be Our Light (MP 1201)**

1. Longing for light,  
we wait in darkness.  
Longing for truth, we turn to you.  
Make us your own,  
your holy people,  
light for the world to see.
2. Longing for peace,  
our world is troubled.  
Longing for hope, many despair.  
Your word alone  
has power to save us.  
Make us your living voice.

*Chorus:*  
*Christ be our light!*  
*Shine in our hearts.*  
*Shine through the darkness.*  
*Christ, be our light!*  
*Shine in your church*  
*gathered today.*

3. Longing for food,  
many are hungry.  
Longing for water,  
many still thirst.  
Make us your bread,  
broken for others,  
shared until all are fed.

**Gospel Reading:** John 1:29-42

## **Hymn: As the Magi Scanned the Heavens**

*(David Bjorlin; Tune: Omni Die)*

1. As the Magi scanned the heavens  
Looking for a cosmic sign,  
Give us faith to search creation  
For a glimpse of truth divine.
2. As the Magi made their journey  
Though their end remained  
unclear,  
Guide us down the unknown  
highways,  
Choosing wonder over fear.
3. As the Magi sought out wisdom  
In a strange and foreign land,  
Lead us out beyond our comfort  
In our quest to understand.
4. As the Magi found their saviour  
In a helpless baby's face,  
Give us eyes to see your glory  
In the most unlikely place.

## **Prayer of Confession**

God of unity,  
**we are divided and broken**  
**and we cannot mend ourselves.**

We are divided within ourselves,  
**filled with conflicting desires and fears.**

We are divided from one another,  
**building barriers that hem in and shut out.**

We are divided from you,  
**drowning out your voice and losing our way.**

God of unity,  
**we are divided and broken and we cannot mend ourselves.**

*Prayer continues in stillness*

God of grace,  
**we are turned to your Spirit**  
**to gift us with wholeness and hope.**  
**Heal our hearts with your tender love.**  
**Heal our lives with your clarion call to justice.**  
**Heal our faith with your living word of truth.**  
**Through Jesus Christ, your gift of life and our true light.**

Source: Rev. Dr. Gordon Wiersma ([www.TheChristianStory.org](http://www.TheChristianStory.org))

### Hymn: O Christ, Lamb of God

*(An Agnus Dei) (Richard Bruxvoort Colligan)*

1. O Christ, Lamb of God  
Sharing our weakness, our weakness  
Have mercy, have mercy

2. O Christ, Lamb of God  
Bearing our healing, our healing  
Have mercy, have mercy

3. O Christ, Lamb of God  
Sharing our story, our story  
Oh grant us, grant us Your peace  
Oh grant us, grant us Your peace  
Amen

**Scripture Readings:** Isaiah 49:1-7  
1 Corinthians 1:1-9

### **Reflection**

Later this year Rory has a class trip to Wellington, and as part of that trip they'll be visiting Wētā Workshop, home of all things Peter Jackson and Lord of the Rings.

To help prepare for that visit, Rory and I are watching the Lord of the Rings films this summer – now we've only watched two of the three films so far, so no spoilers!

I've loved Tolkien's Lord of the Rings since my teens and have fond memories of watching the films multiple times at the Queen Street movie theatre when they were first released while I was at university. Both Tolkien and Peter Jackson are master storytellers who weave an epic story of darkness and hope.

One of the most famous characters in the story is Gollum, a complex and wretched creature who has been corrupted by the One Ring. Gollum is single-minded throughout the story, his focus is on the One Ring, his Precious.

Weirdly, Gollum's single-mindedness reminded me of Paul. In our passage from First Corinthians today, Paul also displays his single-mindedness – however rather than the One Ring, Paul's focus is on Jesus. In the 9 verses we read today, Paul mentions Jesus or Christ 10 times. As you'd expect, Paul is single-mindedly focused on Jesus and his Good News. To quote the Bible Project, First Corinthians is all about seeing every part of life through the lens of the gospel, the Good News of Jesus.

This is not a letter to an individual, but to a community, the church in Corinth.

Corinth was established as a Roman city by Julius Caesar almost 100 years before this letter was written. So it was a relatively new city, but one that was at the centre of trade routes and as such busy and bustling, teeming with people from all over the ancient world. To help paint the picture, Gordon Fee suggests that Corinth was at once the New York, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas of the ancient world.

Paul founded the church in Corinth in 50 AD and spent over a year there. A few years later he had moved on to Ephesus, which is where First Corinthians was written.

So this is a community that is close to Paul's heart, and having heard reports that worry him, he's wanting to help them continue to live a life that reflects the Good News of Jesus. While there are tensions that he will get to later in the letter, our passage today is the introduction and, despite the strained relationships, a section where Paul gives thanks for the Corinthian church.

I love how theologian NT Wright discusses the beginning of this letter. He says:

With a few deft strokes of the pen, [Paul] sketches a picture of the Christians in Corinth so that at every point their story is intertwined with Jesus' story.

God called them in the past, God equips them in the present, and God will complete the whole process in the future. World history, and the story of the Christian life, has a shape, and Jesus is its shaper at every point.

You can see the past, present, future framing in verses 4 to 9.

The past in verses 4-6: I thank my God always for you, because of God's grace that was given to you in Christ Jesus. That is, you were made rich through him in everything: in all your communication and every kind of knowledge, in the same way that the testimony about Christ was confirmed with you.

The present is verse 7: The result is that you aren't missing any spiritual gift while you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

And the future is verses 8 and 9: He will also confirm your testimony about Christ until the end so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, and you were called by him to partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

With that past present future framing in mind, I couldn't help noticing that our passage from Isaiah has a similar construct.

Chapters 40 to 55 of Isaiah are written to the Judeans who are living in exile in Babylon – these are a people who have been taken from their homeland and are living in Mesopotamia, a foreign land.

Like First Corinthians, our passage in Isaiah is an announcement to a broad community: verse 1 starts: listen to me, coastlands, pay attention peoples far away. This imagery of coastlands appears frequently in Isaiah – it's a more poetic way of saying 'people at the ends of the earth'.

The chapter then moves on to a reflection on God's presence in the past: The Lord called me before my birth, called my name when I was in my mother's womb.

It then moves to the present, including the sentence "I have wearied myself in vain. I have used up my strength for nothing." I find that sentence really poignant – working in vain, using up strength for what appears to be no return. I wonder if it's something we can relate to, whether as a community or for some of us as individuals...

Theologian Katie Heffelfinger says "the audience [of Isaiah] are uneasy about their relationship with their God. Their trust in the LORD has been undermined by their experience of exile. They fear that the LORD has abandoned, forgotten, or neglected them. This is the emotional world that the prophetic poet seeks to transform in [these passages]"

The prophet speaking in Isaiah is meeting the people where they are at – acknowledging the challenges and pain that they are experiencing.

But, just like Paul in 1 Corinthians, the prophet looks forward to the future and encourages hope in God, including once again a partnership aspect –verse 6 talks about the community being appointed as light to the nations, so that God's salvation may reach to the end of the earth. An echo back to the covenant promise God made with their ancestors so many years before.

So what does a letter written to a church in Corinth almost 2000 years ago, and prophetic scripture spoken to the Jewish exiles in Babylon over 600 years earlier, mean for us here at Kaurihohore church today?

As with both the Corinthian church and the Jewish exiles, the past, present, future framing is a good way for us to see how our story is intertwined with Jesus's story.

God has called us in the past: we are a church with a long history (in a New Zealand context) of sharing the good news of Jesus, from the original Scottish settlers in Kaurihohore in the 19th century, to a burgeoning congregation in Te Kamo in the later years of the 20th century ...

God equips us in the present: we are in this place and time for a reason, and, like the Corinthians, we are blessed with spiritual gifts. Although perhaps, like the Jewish exiles in Babylon, some of us may be feeling downhearted about our situation compared to when we reflect upon what our church was like in the past...

And last but not least, God will complete the whole process in the future: this is what excites me, and what hopefully excites you too! Paul finishes his Thanksgiving section in 1 Corinthians with verse 9 – God is faithful, and you were called by him to partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is God's call to us too – we are called to partner with Jesus and continue to intertwine our story with his.

Our passage from the Gospel of John this morning gives us an example of what this might look like, with Jesus' question to John the Baptist's disciples "What are you looking for?" and his invitation to "Come and see".

What is it that our community, our neighbours, our friends, are looking for?

And how can we extend an invitation for them to come and see, to experience the good news of Jesus?

This could be through community outreach initiatives where we are partnering with other churches and organisations in our community, like the Building Better Communities conversations that are due to start in February, the ANZAC Day service in Te Kamo, handing out Easter buns to teachers and whānau at Kaurihohore School, all of which, excitingly, we've just received funding from the Northern Presbytery to help us deliver.

It could also be at an individual level – I don't know about you, but for me this can often feel like a challenging task – how can I work for justice and share the Good News in such an unjust and broken world?

I was listening to a podcast last week where this issue was addressed head on – and one of the guests, Rev Suzanne Smith of a small Episcopal Church in Texas, said something that resonated with me:

Our job is not to change the world; our job is to make better the space that we inhabit.

I love that approach so much. Our job is not to change the world; our job is to make better the space that we inhabit.

So I invite you to look around you: what are the situations and where are the relationships where you can, in this season of Epiphany, bring a little bit of light? And in doing so, allow people to come and see Jesus, come and see God's love?

And what are the opportunities for you to partner with us in our church community, and other organisations, to extend an invitation for our community, our neighbours, our friends, to come and see, to experience the good news of Jesus?

Like the church at Corinth, may we remember that every point in our story is intertwined with Jesus' story. God has called us in the past, God equips us in the present, and God will complete the whole process in the future.

May we be a people who are actively partnering with Jesus to share God's love, create hope, and work for justice in our community, in Kaurihohore and Te Kamo, in Whangārei, and beyond.

## Hymn: God of My Breathing

*(Richard Bruxvoort Colligan; Tune: Slane)*

1. God of my breathing and God of my heart  
Spirit embodied in all human parts  
Would that this body, from head to the toes  
Bring forth Your glory in all that I know
2. God of my eating and God of my taste  
Flavour my nourishment full with Your grace  
Bless what comes in through this mouth that it might  
Bless how I live with the kindness of Christ
3. God of my hearing and God of my sight  
Bless all I find from the moment I rise  
Upon this mind your table be found  
Prayerfully offered these visions and sounds
4. God of my footsteps and God of my path  
Where these feet travel may they know no lack  
Shoes on the pavement or toes in the soil  
Carry your servant where Christ bids them go
5. God of my memories, Lord of this mind  
God of the moment whose vision is time  
All I remember and all I forget  
Hold in Your keeping so this soul might rest
6. God of my limits and God of all truth  
You who have knit me with joy in the womb  
Would that this body from head to the toes  
Bring forth Your glory in all that I know

## **Offering Prayer**

Through your gifts, change will take place.

**Through our gifts, friendship will be experienced;  
through our gifts, joy will come to life;  
through our gifts, healing will be possible;  
through our gifts, community will be created;  
through our gifts, freedom will be experienced.**

Bless these our gifts, O God. Amen.

*Source: David Sparks, Prayers to Share Year A*

## **Community Time – Celebrations, Notices, Concerns for prayer**

## Prayers of Intercession

God of compassion, you have proclaimed  
that your home is here among us mortals.  
You desire to dwell here among your people,  
to be with us and wipe away our tears.  
Today we cry out to you  
because there is much in this world to mourn.  
Today we pray that you might come  
to help us in our struggles.

We pray for those who mourn the loss of loved ones ...  
Come and make your home with them.  
Let new life grow in place of death.  
Give comfort, grace, and holy assurance.

We pray for those who suffer pain and illness ...  
Come and make your home with them.  
Grant healing and recovery.  
Share strength and hope.

We pray for those who live with violence and war ...  
Come and make your home with them.  
Protect them.  
Work for reconciliation, justice, and peace.

We pray for those who have lost their homes ...  
Come and make your home with them.  
Guide them toward sanctuary and shelter.  
Surround them with community and compassion.

Come into this world  
and make your home with your beloved.  
Abide with us and be our God.  
Hear our prayers and respond,  
until your heavenly kingdom comes. **Amen.**

## Hymn: Dare to Live the Dream God Gives You

*(Protest of Praise; Tune: Hyfrydol)*

1. Dare to live the dream God  
gives you,  
Seek out paths as yet unknown,  
For the Spirit leads you onward,  
And you never walk alone.

*Refrain:*

*Go in courage, walking humbly,  
Bearing love none can destroy.  
Doing justice, loving mercy,  
Go with God, and go in joy.*

2. When the dread of doubt  
assails you,  
And the road remains unclear,  
Yet our faithful God will guide you  
Through the doubt and dread  
of fear.

3. Journey on with true companions,  
Joining hands and sharing bread,  
For we share a common journey  
And in friendship we are fed.

4. Dare to live the dream God gives  
us,  
Brave the path, and face the fear,  
For the Spirit will unite us;  
Christ himself is always near.

*Refrain:*

*Go in courage, walking humbly,  
Bearing love none can destroy.  
Doing justice, loving mercy,  
Go with God, and go in joy.*

**Benediction**

Bear witness to the way of Jesus.  
Go with the compassion of God,  
the love of Jesus, and the wisdom of the Spirit.  
Go with God, and Jesus will lead you in the way  
that leads to life.  
Amen.

**Closing karakia:**

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  
Amine

Translation

*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  
Amen*

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