



KAURIHOHORE / KAMO CO-OPERATING PARISH

kaurichurch.methodist.org.nz

kaurichurch@gmail.com

(09) 946 0813

59 Apotu Road, Kaurihohore



Sunday 19 October 2025 – Pentecost 19

The service today has been prepared by
Richard Smith, one of our Lay Preachers and
Cobus Viljoen, Lay Preacher in training.

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

Kia ora e te whanau, good morning, faith-family, welcome to worship at Kauri this morning, the nineteenth Sunday of the season of Pentecost. I like this time of the year, when we have some time to think about our faith, and how our trust in the Way of Jesus links with how we live and love in the world. We have spent some time reflecting on the world we have been given to live in, through the season of creation, and now we turn to relate our faith to human society.

Next week, its Industrial Sunday, when we reflect on how loving our neighbour is worked out in the world of work. At a time of doctors' strikes and firemen's' strikes and teachers' strikes, that could be an interesting week.

This week, we are looking at two big ideas or themes, Covenant and Justice. What does it mean to say we worship a God who loves everyone just like he loves us? That each human being is equally made in his image. That we are called to be his body on earth, making all things new, fresh, revitalised. How they were always meant to be. And, fittingly, our value for this week is Inclusiveness.

I have invited Cobus Viljoen to share in preparing and conducting this morning's service with me as part of his training as a lay preacher. Cobus will conduct the first part of the service, and I will lead us through the rest of it. So, welcome to your new role Cobus.

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

Call to Worship:

(adapted from Psalm 119:97 - 104)

Oh, how we love your teaching, dear Lord.
We meditate on your instruction all day long.

**Lord, your instruction makes us wiser than all that come
against us, in understanding, we surpass even our teachers.**

We understand more than the ancients,
our feet depart from evil, for You have taught us.

**From every worry we walk away, from every care we depart,
For Your word is written on our hearts.**

Continue teaching your people, Oh Lord.
Amen

Hymn HFTC 453: [Before The Throne Of God Above](#)

Opening Prayer:

(adapted from 2 Tim 3: 14 -17)

Lord, let us continue in what we have learned,
what we have become convinced of from the day we were born again,
you taught us from Scripture, which is able to give us understanding,
how Jesus Christ saved us, through faith in Him.
All scripture is God breathed, useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, training to
righteousness, so that we, people of God,
may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. **Amen.**

Hymn HFTC 36: [O God Beyond All Praising](#)

Centring Prayer

Loving Lord, we come into this time of worship knowing we are not able to make this
world into your kingdom of Love by following rules and procedures. Forgive us
when, in our enthusiasm, we think we can do it in our own strength. Help us to grow
our trust in your loving presence and to open ourselves to become channels through
which your transforming spirit is shared with all humanity and the whole world.
Amen.

Readings: *(New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised)*

The prophet looks forward to a day of rebuilding when Judah and Israel will flourish again. In this new day, everyone will have the opportunity to know God and God's way of justice written on our hearts. As the prophet Jeremiah looks toward a new beginning, we imagine what the future may contain and how we can work towards flourishing for all.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 - A New Covenant

³¹ The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

In our reading from the gospel of Luke the writer uses the example of a widow who does not give up on demanding justice. Even the unjust judge will listen to her and make sure she is satisfied.

Luke 18:1-8 - The Parable of the Widow and the Unjust Judge

18 Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. ² He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. ³ In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, "Grant me justice against my opponent." ⁴ For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, "Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming." ⁶ And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? ⁸ I tell you; he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?

Reflection: Covenant and Justice

How do you establish and maintain a healthy relationship with God and how will such a relationship drive you to live? That is the pair of questions we are reflecting on this morning.

“This is the covenant I will makesays the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

This is an extraordinary statement, especially when we consider it was written during the time the people of Israel were in exile in Babylon between 597 and 539 BC.

But let's back up a bit. When I checked the Cambridge Dictionary of Christianity it noted that the Priestly source, in the first five books of the Bible, mentions covenants between God and Noah, God and Abraham, and God and Moses, each sealed with a visible sign (a rain-bow, circumcision, the teaching or instruction,) (which we have already referred to in our call to worship and in our prayer). The dictionary then continues,” The divine promise to Abraham was distorted into a concept of privilege, leading the prophet Amos to insist that election was a call to assume responsibility toward others, and leading the prophet Jeremiah to prophesy a new covenant of flesh and blood, a responsive heart-mind to replace one of stone.”

So, our reading from the book of Jeremiah this morning is about leaving behind an old idea of an external God requiring people do some special ritual, the covenant with Abraham, or to comply with certain rules of behaviour in order to be in a right relationship with him, the covenant with Moses; and replacing it with God taking the initiative to establish a right relationship with each human being as a given. “They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.” In the new covenant God is known inside each person who is freely forgiven and so freed from guilt.

It is this transformation from fear and guilt to freedom, and knowing ourselves as loved in the core of our being just as we are, that we celebrate each Christmas. I suspect that is why these readings are set down during these weeks before Advent, so we have time to work through the challenge of them, before we are due to prepare ourselves for the celebration. We cannot, and need not, try to earn our way into a healthy relationship with God, it is already a given, we just have to open up and accept it, marvel at it, revel in it, enjoy it.

That's what Jesus meant when he declared, "The Kingdom of God has come near, it is among you and within you."

When we take bread, symbol of the Body of Christ, and eat it, we are enacting this new covenant, the indwelling of God in each of us. When we drink the communion juice, symbol of God's life force in Jesus, we are enacting this new covenant. We take on the awesome responsibility of becoming the Body of Christ, infused with the presence of God's spirit within us, to fulfil God's will in this world.

It has taken more than two and a half thousand years, since Jeremiah declared, "This is the covenant I will make." We still tend to talk, and I'm sure still at times think, of God as out there, rather than in here, present in each of us, and in the people we meet, and in the community; in the natural world, his creation, yet that is where we meet him, and where we are called to live out, his being. His creativity, his forgivingness, his compassion.

And so, we come to the story of the unjust Judge and the persistent widow. I wonder whether you found yourself identifying with the judge or the widow? Or were you just an uninvolved, dispassionate external observer? In your mind is God the unjust judge, or is the vulnerable widow-woman God? Or is God an external uninvolved dispassionate observer too?

Reading the Gospel of Luke, and the picture he paints, of the character of Jesus, I suspect he is inviting us to see God in the persistent widow, vulnerable, with no support from those male family members who would be expected to turn up, to argue her case for her, before a judge who has not called in the other two independent judges he should have involved to ensure a fair hearing.

The unsupported vulnerable widow, like God, is facing an unjust world, with no respect for God or people, calling for justice, on and on and on. Is that our call? In a world dominated by selfishness and greed, by callous disregard for normal standards of humanity and fairness, are we called to stand with the vulnerable dispossessed, and persistently call for justice and fair humane treatment, regardless of any guilt?

I suspect that is the call of faith. To believe so thoroughly in the rightness of humanity, that we keep on keeping on, until every injustice in this world, is corrected and all have sufficient food, clothing and housing, recognition of their humanity, and a place in society, that they truly feel forgiven, vindicated and included, regardless of who they may be, for all are equally children of one father who is in all and loves all. Amen.

Hymn: FFS 57: [Song Of Faith That Sings Forever](#)

Lyrics: Shirley Murray, Tune: Abbeyfield by Colin Gibson)

*1. Song of faith that sings forever
through God's people, ages long,
Word that holds the world together
when our hearts take up the song,
always, always, somewhere sounding,
though the source we do not see,
counterpoint to all despairing,
it is hope that sets the key.*

*2. Song of faith in exaltation,
rising through the vaults of prayer,
tune of simple celebration
offered up in open air,
song in chapel and cathedral,
descant to our daily tone,
song from sickbed or in prison,
faith must often sing alone.*

*3. And when life would overwhelm us,
when there seems no song to sing,
hear the constant voice of courage
out of fear and suffering:
all who've loved and trusted Jesus,
all who lift us to be strong,
endless, endless are the voices
of the faith that makes the song.*

Community Time: Notices; Celebrations; Concerns for Prayer

Prayer for Others:

(Let us pause for a while as we pray for those we have just heard of)

Loving God, like the widow in our reading today,
we cry out to you for justice, justice for the poor,
justice for the oppressed,
justice for people with physical and mental disabilities,
and justice for all who are marginalised or excluded.

We cry out for justice for Indigenous people around the world, as we remember in particular the covenant on which our nation is based, and all those whose lives have been devastated by its breaking.

We pray for all those entrapped by fear of what justice might require of them.

We cry out for justice for women. We cry out for justice for children.

We cry out for those who have had to flee their homes,
for refugees and for asylum seekers
and for those who did not make it out of their homes alive.

We cry out for justice for the planet.

We cry out for justice for the animals, for the land, seas and for the skies.

We cry out for justice today.

Lord, hear our prayers, and let our cry be heard.

Amen.

Offertory Prayer:

(based on Malachi 3:10)

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.

**Gracious, generous, God, the inspiration for all our loving,
accept us and our gifts of time, talents and resources which we offer for
the work of justice, love and community in this place.**

Amen

Hymn: HIOS 35: [Go Gently, Go Lightly, Go Safe In The Spirit](#)

(Lyrics: Shirley Murray, Tune: Legere by Colin Gibson)

1. Go gently, go lightly,
go safe in the Spirit,
live simply, don't carry
much more than you need:
go trusting God's goodness,
go spreading God's kindness,
stay centred on Jesus
and where he will lead.

2. Go singing, go bringing
the gifts of the Spirit,
go hopefully searching
for things that are true:
in living, in loving,
whatever befalls you,
God keep you; God bless you
in all that you do.

Commissioning and Blessing:

May God bless you today.
May God bless you with eyes to see.
May God bless you with ears to hear.
May God bless you with a heart to care for the injustice of this world.
And may God bless you with a vision of justice that never gives up, seeking
persistently to spread love and care this day and always.
**May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,
The Father, Son, and Spirit,
give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation
to grow in the knowledge of Him.**

Threefold Amen.

Acknowledgements:

Liturgy Learning and (Purposeful) Life (L3)

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