



KAURIHOHORE / KAMO CO-OPERATING PARISH

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Sunday 29 March 2026 – Palm Sunday

Our Service today has been co-ordinated by Richard Smith,
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.

Justice: we hope for a better world for all and work together to be part of making that happen.

We acknowledge Viv Whimster, author of the L3 material, and Philip Garside, author of the Worship Outside the Box material, used in the preparation of this service.

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Welcome

Kia ora e te whanau; Good morning, Faith family. Naumai, naumai, welcome, to worship at Kauri this morning. The value we focus on this week is Justice. All through Lent we have been exploring together with our community what does justice require of us here, now, in the New Zealand of the twenty-first century?

Today is Palm Sunday, the last Sunday in Lent, which is the season of preparation during which we get ourselves ready for Easter. We are nearly there, are you ready yet? We come, with all our long-held expectations, but like the disciples, are we about to be challenged beyond our comfort and run away when we finally come face to face with the real test of whether we are willing to pay the price and follow Jesus all the way - the real test ahead!

Today, we begin to explore the journey from Hosanna to the cross, where Jesus' humble love invites us to turn our praise into compassion and to walk with him through both celebration and sorrow. Gratitude becomes a courageous plea: The way of forgiving love, the rejected stone, is God's cornerstone; The cry, 'Save us' (*Hosanna*) rises from trust and need.

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

Call to Worship (based on Psalm 118:1–2, 19–29)

Come, followers of Christ, wave your branches high!

Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in God's name! (*wave flax*)

Come, travellers on the road of sorrow and hope.

We come, following the One who will not turn away.

Come people of God, give thanks to the Lord for he is good;

His steadfast love endures forever!

¹⁹ Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the Lord.

²⁰ **This is the gate of the Lord;
the righteous shall enter through it.**

²¹ I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.

²² **The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.**

²³ This is the Lord's doing;
it is marvellous in our eyes.

²⁴ **This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

²⁵ Save us, we beseech you, O Lord!
O Lord, we beseech you, give us fulfilment!

²⁶ **Blessed in the name of the Lord is the one who comes
We bless you from the house of the Lord.**

Hymn SPCH 93: [Hosanna, Loud Hosanna](#), (*Chosen by Valerie*)

(Lyrics: Jennette Threlfall, Tune: Ellacombe)

1. Hosanna, loud hosanna,
The little children sang;
Through pillared court and temple
The joyful anthem rang;
To Jesus, who had blessed them
Close folded to His breast,
The children sang their praises,
The simplest and the best.

2. From Olivet they followed,
‘Mid an exultant crowd,
The victor palm-branch waving,
And chanting clear and loud;
Bright angels joined the chorus,
Beyond the cloudless sky,
Hosanna in the highest!
Glory to God on high!

3. Fair leaves of silvery olive
They strowed upon the ground,
While Salem’s circling mountains
Echoed the joyful sound;
The Lord of men and angels
Rode on in lowly state,
Nor scorned that little children
Should on His bidding wait.

4. ‘Hosana in the highest!’
That ancient song we sing,
For Christ is our Redeemer,
The Lord of heaven our King.
O may we ever praise Him
With heart and life and voice,
And in His blissful presence
Eternally rejoice.

Candle extinguishing

We have gathered here, week after week, sharing a common quest for a deeper faith and a deeper experience of the divine. I invite you now to close your eyes and let go of the things that distract and concern you. Listen! The time is drawing near. Jesus is preparing to enter Jerusalem. How will we greet him? Will we follow him all the way to the Cross? The power of Jesus is that he lived what he taught, even when it led to his death. He lived with an abiding awareness of God, radiating the light of God in all he said and did. But that light was too much for the world. There are forces today, as there were in ancient Judea, that conspire to put it out. Where are we in this drama? What are we willing to risk to follow Jesus?

(Silent time)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of illness and disease in the world.

(A candle is extinguished)

Opening Prayer

(Let us pray)

Loving God, there are so many choices before us every day. Choices offered by our friends, our families, our culture, our own past. Some of them encourage the well-being of the earth, ourselves and our neighbours; others are destructive. Help us to distinguish between them. May we learn from the choices of Jesus and embody compassion, justice, and inclusion in all we say and do. Amen.

Hymn TIS 684: [Love Will Be Our Lenten Calling](#)

(Tune: Regent Square HFTC 30)

1. Love will be our Lenten calling'
love to shake and shatter sin,
waking every closed, cold spirit,
stirring new life deep within,
till the quickened heart remembers
what our Easter birth can mean.

as we turn for home again,
longing for the words of pardon,
stripping off old grief and pain,
till we stand, restored and joyful,
with the Church on Easter day.

2. Peace will be our Lenten living

3. Truth will be our Lenten learning:
hear the Crucified One call!
Shadowed by the Saviour's passion,
Images and idols fall,
and, in Easter's holy splendour,
God alone is all in all.

Prayer of Centring and Renewal

The Road Between Hosanna and the Cross

Between shouts of 'Hosanna' and 'Crucify,' Jesus chooses the way of humble love, inviting us to let our praise become compassion in real life.

(Please remain seated and sing hymn prayerfully)

Hymn HIOS 10: [Because You Came and Sat Beside Us](#)

(Lyrics by Shirely Murray, Tune: Forgiveness by Colin Gibson)

1. Because you came and sat beside us,
because you came and heard us speak,
and we ignored you and we refused you,
we ask forgiveness, Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Because you laughed and loved the child-like,
because you lived from day to day,
and we love status and steady money,
we ask forgiveness, Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Because our peace was your agenda,
because you wept to see us war,
and we love power and winning battles,
we ask forgiveness, Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Because your cross compels an answer,
because your love absorbs our sin,
and we are wounded because we wound you,
we ask forgiveness, Lord Jesus Christ.
5. Because you came on Easter morning,
because you come at Pentecost,
and in the Spirit, we are forgiven,
we live to praise you, Lord Jesus Christ!

(Let us pray)

Humble Christ, you enter our cities and our lives without force,
choosing the colt, not the chariot;
choosing service, not show.

When the cheers fade, and the shadows lengthen,
stay with us through the long night,
that we may learn the courage of compassion
and the steadfastness of your love.

**Merciful God,
we praise you with our lips and deny you with our lives.
We want victory without vulnerability,
triumph without tenderness,
Easter without the road to the cross.
Forgive us.
Turn our hosannas into daily mercy,
our admiration into faithful action,
our fear into love. Amen.**

Hymn: Upon A Humble Donkey's Back

(Chosen by Richard)

(Lyrics: William L. (Bill) Wallace, Tune: Robert Jackson)

1. Upon a humble donkey's back
the prophet Jesus chose to ride;
a sign of peace for all to see,
a sign of love and liberty.

2. Christ speaks the word of vibrant life,
but many choose to follow death:
they nail his body to a tree,
rejecting all that sets them free.
3. Come, sister, brother, join with me
to plan and pray and overthrow
all hate and fear, all hardened hearts,
all cold conniving deathly arts.
4. Take up your palms and dance for joy,
the final word is “God is love”;
that love shall conquer hatred’s night
and bring the time of peace and light.

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

Jesus enters Jerusalem, not as a warlord but as humble peace; the crowd names hopes they barely understand, and the whole city asks, ‘Who is this?’

The way Matthew has moulded his answer to this question, his story of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, is clearly shaped by his knowledge of Psalm 118 which we read as our call to worship this morning. I cannot now find where I read it, but somewhere one of the Biblical scholars seeking to uncover the historical Jesus, notes that this story indicates that it occurred during the Jewish Festival of Booths or Feast of Tabernacles, Sukkot, the Jewish harvest festival in late autumn, September or October. So, once again Matthew’s answer to the question, “Who is this? Is his repeated proclamation ‘This is God’s Messiah we have been waiting for, Follow him!

Matthew 21:1-11

(page 1535)

Jesus’ Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

21 When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, ‘Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, just say this, “The Lord needs them.” And he will send them immediately. ⁴ This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

⁵ ‘Tell the daughter of Zion,
Look, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷ they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

‘Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!’

¹⁰ When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, ‘Who is this?’ ¹¹ The crowds were saying, ‘This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.’

Hymn FFS 21A– “Song” by James K Baxter *(Chosen and sung by Eleanor)*

My love came through the city
And they did not know him
With his beard and his eyes and his gentle hands
For he was a working man.

My love stood on the lakeshore
And spoke to the people there
And the fish in the water forgot to swim
And the birds were quiet in the air.

‘Truth’ - he said, and - ‘Love’ - he said,
But his purest word was - ‘Mercy’ -
And the fishermen left their boats and came
To share his poverty.

My love was taken before the judge
And they nailed him on a tree
With his strong face and his long brown hair
And the whiteness of his body.

‘Truth’ - he said, and - ‘Love’ - he said,
But his purest word was - ‘Mercy’ -
And the blood ran down and the sun grew dark
For the lack of his company.

My love was only a working man
And now he is God on high;
I have left my books and my bed and my house,
To follow him till I die.

'Truth' - he said, and - 'Love' - he said,
But his purest word was - 'Mercy' -
Flowers and candles I bring to him
And no man is kinder than he.

Poem - Palm Sunday, by Jay Hulme

(From the book, The Backwater Sermons, by Jay Hulme)

(Chosen by Kimberley, read by Jeanette)

One day soon they will ask what this means
as He enters the city on a donkey, for peace;
neither brought by a warhorse, or by his feet,
on a path strewn with cloaks with palm leaves beneath.

And the chaos He causes is a seismic event,
there's no need to make speeches when you're heaven sent;
and the leaders and rulers, on the walls, half bent,
look down at this Man in triumphal lament.

He wept for the city, and now that He's near
He rides without speaking, and still the crowd cheer,
clamouring loudly through danger and fear:
The prophet called Jesus is here! He is here!

His presence is preaching, but no one can know
the reason He's come or the way that He'll go,
and today He just rides, gentle and slow,
down the road, through the gates, over palm leaves,

and so –

when they look at this day, beginning to see
the ways He fulfils each of these prophecies,
they'll notice a quietness, beyond all belief:
God claiming this kingdom, without having to speak.

Reflection

Just as Jesus, in Holy Week, moved from a joyous demonstration, to the horror of the cross, to the mystery of resurrection, so our faith journeys often move from a place of contentment or even joy, to a struggle with new experiences, new ideas, new understandings that challenge our earlier beliefs, understandings and ways of living out our faith, to a transformed and deeper faith and new ways of living out our faith in daily life.

So I invite you now, as you make yourself a flax cross, to take some time to reflect on what your Lenten journey has meant for you this year and what the various readings, hymns and songs we have shared in listening to and singing together today have to say to us in the twenty-first century about the meaning of Lent, Palm Sunday and the Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter to come. Where have you been this Lent in your faith journey; joy? struggle? transformation? or sitting on the side-line watching as the world goes by?

[Making a Flax Cross – Link](#)

This week the value we focus on is Justice: we hope for a better world for all and work together to be part of making that happen. Our Lenten journey as a congregation this year has been all about justice and what committing ourselves to that value might require of us and our society. Our personal faith journey is part of the journey of our family, our church, our community, our society, our time and culture. Symbolising this value, we offer our crosses into the common pool for distribution on Good Friday.

Offering (*The crosses are collected and brought forward with the offering*)

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

Loving God, we give you thanks that we can gather with each other to share in worship, to celebrate your coming, your forgiving, your loving. As we have shared over the last six weeks in learning of the issues facing so many in our society, we come to share with you and each other this time of celebration, reflection and self-giving.

We lay our branches down in the form of time, talents and tithes.

Take these gifts, O God, and make of them shelter for the weary, food for the hungry, and companionship for the lonely. Amen.

Community Time: Notices, Celebrations, Concerns for Prayer

Prayers of the People

This morning I invite you to form six groups, each group take one of the Building Better Communities 26 conversation summaries and craft a section of our Prayers of the People in three sections mirroring the three questions;

What is the key issue or are the key issues? Who do we need to pray for?

What is your dream of a better community? What do we pray for them?

Who has to do what to get there? What do we pray that we and others will do about it?

Write out your prayer and send one of your group up to lead that section of our prayer.

When all are ready, we will share our prayers together.

Loving Lord, we celebrate your coming among us in the person of Jesus and in the Holy Spirit. Help us to share this joy with all those our lives touch. We celebrate our time of preparation through the season of Lent and this Palm Sunday. We thank you for all the local experts who have shared with us their knowledge of the people and issues through our Building Better Communities conversations and those members of the community you have brought to share in those conversations with us. Guide us now as we reflect on what you have brought to our attention.

Children and Youth:

Work and Incomes:

Crime and Punishment:

Housing:

Social Hazards:

Māori Wellbeing:

Lord, continue to journey with us as we travel through this Holy Week ahead and through the Easters of our lives. This we ask in the name of your son, Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Hymn: [Because He Lives](#)

(Chosen by Sylvia)

(Lyrics: Gloria and William Gaither, Tune: William Gaither)

1. God sent his Son, they called him Jesus,
He came to love, heal and forgive;
He lived and died to buy my pardon
An empty grave is there to prove my Saviour Lives.

Refrain:

Because he lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because he lives, all fear is gone,
Because I know he holds the future,
and life is worth the living just because he lives.

2. How sweet to hold a new born baby,
and feel the pride and joy he gives;
But greater still the calm assurance,
this child can face uncertain days because he lives

Refrain

3. And then one day I'll cross the river;
I'll fight life's final war with pain,
And then as death gives way to victory,
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know he reigns.

Refrain

Commissioning and Blessing

Just as Jesus in Holy Week moved from a joyous demonstration, to the horror of the cross, to the mystery of resurrection, so our faith journeys often move from a place of contentment or joy, to a struggle, to a transformed and deeper faith. Go now Faith Family, go out into the week ahead, your lives ahead, sharing in the joys and the challenges of life, knowing the one who rode a donkey into the city, now lives beside you and in you, all the way ahead.

We go into whatever joy or sorrow life will bring, knowing he is with us, trusting he will keep our minds and hearts open on the journey, and lift us up when we fall.

Sung Amen

Building Better Communities: This series was organised by our Parish as a Lenten Study. Thank you to all of you who have supported this series in various ways.

Summary of Building Better Communities: Social Hazards

The fifth week of the Building Better Communities series, held on 17 March, focused on the pressing topic of Social Hazards. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Teneille Johnson and Richard Dick for their insightful presentation and for sharing their extensive experience in social work and addiction services. Teneille, the Community Ministries Manager for The Salvation Army in Whangārei, and Richard, Director of the Bridge Addiction Services and chair for Te Ara Oranga, provided a grounded look at the challenges facing our community. Their message underscored a central goal: creating safer, stronger, and more connected whānau through practical, affirming support.

The presentation highlighted a significant rise in social hazards, noting that methamphetamine use has more than doubled since 2022, while cocaine use reached its highest levels in 2025. In Northland, high deprivation levels contribute to these issues, with wastewater testing revealing particularly high methamphetamine statistics in Kaitaia and the mid-North. Richard and Teneille emphasised that we "cannot arrest our way out of this problem," advocating instead for collaborative models like Te Ara Oranga, which partner police with health services to address the health needs driving addiction. They noted that while recent government investment in response teams is welcome, the demand for services – particularly residential care – continues to outstrip available funding.

During the small group discussions, attendees identified the complex, systemic drivers behind these hazards, including poverty, unemployment, and housing instability. The conversation touched on the profound impact of colonisation, loss of land, and systemic racism, which have contributed to a loss of identity and a lack of resilience in some families. Participants noted that social hazards often compound, leading to multigenerational struggles where trauma acts as a primary driver for addiction.

There was a shared concern that rural communities have been particularly decimated by drug addiction and subsequent family harm.

The community's dreams for a better future centred on the idea that connection is the opposite of addiction. Discussion groups envisioned a society that prioritises community care, stability, and manaakitanga over criminalisation.

Key proposed actions included lobbying to remove alcohol from supermarkets, raising the age for alcohol and cannabis usage to 25, and advocating for more residential drug rehabilitation facilities within Whangārei and the wider Northland region. Ultimately, the session concluded that fulfilling these dreams requires a collaborative focus – partnering with Māori, incorporating te ao Māori understandings of identity, and ensuring that those struggling with addiction are met with less judgement and more care.

Summary of Building Better Communities: Māori Wellbeing

The sixth and final week of the Building Better Communities series concluded on 24 March. The session focused on Māori Wellbeing, utilising data from the Salvation Army's State of the Nation reports to ground local dialogue in current social realities. Although the scheduled guest speaker was unable to attend, the evening was made possible by the generous contributions of Harley, Tim, and Carol, who stepped up to share their insights and perspectives before the small group discussions commenced. Their willingness to volunteer ensured the conversation remained focused on meaningful local action and the lived experiences of Whangārei whānau.

During the discussion phase, participants identified several systemic hurdles currently impacting Māori wellbeing. A significant portion of the dialogue centred on the ongoing effects of land alienation and the erosion of cultural stewardship, which contribute to a sense of disconnection. Attendees highlighted how intergenerational trauma and the loss of language have fractured social ties and identity.

These cultural challenges are further compounded by material hardships, including poor housing quality and a lack of local job opportunities, leaving many families to navigate the daily pressures of inequity and poverty.

When asked to envision a better future, a concept that emerged was one of Kotahitanga – a sense of oneness that values diversity to develop and strengthen the collective culture. A primary dream shared by participants is a community that actively lives out the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi through ongoing development and the honest recognition of history. This vision includes the practical restoration of land to be utilised for the benefit of the people, alongside the growth of locally owned businesses that provide stability, justice, and fair opportunities. The aspiration for a more culturally vibrant environment was also represented by the desire to see Te Reo Māori signage integrated throughout the community.

The session concluded with a call for holistic action and community-led development. Key proposals included the development of transitional urban marae to support cultural identification and the reinstatement of recently cancelled Māori initiatives.

Education was identified as a vital tool for growth, specifically through providing learning opportunities for both current and future parents. To foster immediate connection and resource security, attendees suggested practical steps such as establishing community gardens and focusing on long-term employment and stable housing solutions.