



# KAURIHOHORE / KAMO CO-OPERATING PARISH

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## Sunday 4 January 2026 – Christmas 2

Our Service today is led by  
Jane Garrick, 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.***

**Togetherness:** we cultivate genuine opportunities to gather together in worship and fellowship.

**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

A very good morning to you and welcome to our service this morning. The church year began at the end of November with the season of Advent where we looked forward to the coming of Christ. Today's service is our final one before moving into the season of Epiphany. We are continuing our theme of beginnings, and our gospel message today comes from the first chapter of John, which I believe contain some of the most beautiful words in Scripture – *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”* Jesus, the Christ, has chosen and known us from the beginning of all Creation.

## Call to Worship

Wisdom cries out with radiant voice

**We gather to listen for her truth**

The Word was in the beginning, full of grace

**We come to dwell in light and love**

From the mouth of God, wisdom flowed

**We come thirsty for holy presence**

Jesus, the Word made flesh, lives among us

**We come to behold the glory of God**

Wisdom walks the paths of sea and sky

**We come with awe and reverence**

The Word speaks through mist and mystery

**We come with questions and hope**

God's Spirit weaves all things together

**We come seeking connection and clarity**

The light shines in the darkness, still

**We come to be kindled with courage**

Wisdom builds her house among the people

**We come to find our home in God's love**

Come, seekers of Spirit, truth, and belonging

**We come as we are—each beloved and called**

Let us worship the Holy One

**Let us be renewed in Wisdom and the Word. Amen.**

## **Opening Prayer**

Thank You Loving God for Your wisdom, truth and love. Thank You for Your grace and presence with us.

**We come with open hearts to present ourselves to You**

Looking to You to come with Your mercy and help us in all our weaknesses and needs.

**Help us to fully come and give You the honour and worship You deserve.**

You alone are our light and hope.

**Amen.**

## **Hymn: Christ be our Light**

*(Lyrics and Tune by Bernadette Farrell)*

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

*Chorus:*

*Christ, be our light*

*Shine in our hearts*

*Shine through the darkness*

*Christ, be our light*

*Shine in Your church gathered today*

2. Longing for shelter, many are homeless  
Longing for warmth, many are cold  
Make us Your building, sheltering others  
Walls made of living stone

*Chorus:*

3. Many the gifts, many the people  
Many the hearts that yearn to belong  
Let us be servants to one another  
Making Your kingdom come

*Chorus:*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

### **Words of Assurance**

The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness cannot overcome it.  
You are known, not by what you do, but by who God is.  
Wisdom dwells with you. Grace lives in you.  
You are beloved, enfolded, and free. **Amen.**

### **Sharing the Peace**

*Let's greet each other saying: "God's peace be with you."*

### **Hymn AA 94: Loving Spirit**

*(Lyrics: Shirley Murray Tune: Colin Gibson)*

1. Loving Spirit, loving Spirit,  
you have chosen me to be;  
you have drawn me to your wonder,  
you have set your sign on me.
2. Like a mother you enfold me,  
hold my life within your own,  
feed me with your very body,  
form me of your flesh and bone.

3. Like a father you protect me,  
teach me the discerning eye,  
hoist me up upon your shoulder,  
let me see the world from high.
  
4. Friend and lover, in your closeness  
I am known and held and blest:  
in your promise is my comfort,  
in your presence I may rest.

## Readings

Ephesians 1:3-14

John 1:1-18

## Reflection

In *Alice in Wonderland* the White Rabbit asks, 'Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?' 'Begin at the beginning,' replies the King, gravely, 'and go on till you come to the end: then stop.' Some people live life like that – they are born, they live and then they die. They seem to accept that what is seen and known is reality; that beginnings and endings are just part of being alive.

But is that all there is to life? As believers in Christ, we know there is much more and there is a challenge for us here to live out our faith in a way that shows the world we know there is a glorious future life awaiting us.

Mary Queen of Scots, supposedly on the scaffold said, "*My end is my beginning.*" A woman of faith, she knew she had an eternal home.

Our reading from Ephesians this morning reads as a list of facts:

- We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ
- He chose us before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight
- He predestined us to adoption as sons and daughters
- He has freely given us His grace
- We have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of sins
- When we believed we were marked with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit

Do these words flow over us like water on a duck's back or have they taken root in us and become words of life? To what extent am I, are you, aware of these liberating truths, let alone living them out? They are transformative truths; the kind of truths that turn us from caterpillars into butterflies. If indeed we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ, redeemed and forgiven, how then should we live?

As we are mindful of these truths, each new day becomes another new beginning and an opportunity to share more light and love into the world. Every moment and experience, every prayer or thought becomes significant in the scheme of things.

You were made for such a time as this. You are not an accident. You have been chosen since the foundation of the world to live in the here and now. Whatever the trials and burdens are that you are facing now, in Christ you are able. He is with you.

Not only does the passage from Ephesians encourage and challenge us, but our Gospel reading from John chapter 1 provides the big picture understanding for us. *"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him and without Him nothing was made that was made."* This beautifully echoes Genesis 1:1, confirming that Jesus existed before Creation. We learn here too that Jesus is divine and One with God the Father. Jesus is not just a good teacher or prophet – He is God Himself.

It is worth quoting C.S. Lewis who very clearly deals with the claim that Jesus was only a great moral teacher. In his book *Mere Christianity*, he writes *"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse.... You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."*

In this world of shifting truths, it is reassuring to know that we are anchored to the eternal Word of God. The storms of life come but we are held firm, just as the old hymn asserts:

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
steadfast and sure while the billows roll;  
fastened to the Rock which cannot move,  
grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.* (Priscilla Owens 1882)

In Jesus is life and this life is the light of men. *"And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it."* There once was an aging king with three sons who needed to determine his successor. He devised a test: fill an empty room completely within 30 days. The first two sons tried conventional approaches – one with rocks, another with feathers. Despite their exhaustive efforts, tiny spaces remained unfilled.

But the third son? He simply brought a candle into the dark room. With one small flame, he filled every corner with light. This simple act revealed a profound truth: a single light can dispel all darkness.

This is our Jesus – just as the darkness must flee when a light goes on in a dark room, as He lives in us, the old hurts and darknesses cannot stay. We need to let the light of His Word into our minds and hearts – this is why regular Bible reading is so important. There has never been anything close to the transformative power of the written word of God. Let it illumine your mind, your heart and your world.

The theme of light continues through this passage in John and indeed throughout the whole Gospel. Here are some ways that Jesus' light transforms us:

- We are able to draw near to God in a way we have never experienced before. He enables us to receive more love, more joy and more faith. The eyes of our hearts are opened.
- We are freed from Fear. Remember how Adam and Eve hid from God after their sin? Fear entered human existence at that moment, and it continues to plague us today. We are afraid of many things, especially death. But here's the powerful truth: when Jesus' light enters our lives, it displaces fear with perfect love. "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear" – 1 John 4:18
- We can enter into our Spiritual Rest. In our modern world, especially post-COVID, anxiety and restlessness have reached unprecedented levels. Many try to fill their inner emptiness with material possessions, achievements, or relationships. But like the first two princes trying to fill the room, these efforts always leave gaps.

Jesus says "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" – Matthew 11:28

Consider the powerful testimony from the story of the *Bridge over River Kwai*, set in World War 2. It tells of the shocking hardships faced by Allied prisoners of war who are forced by their Japanese captors to build a bridge in Thailand. Among the prisoners facing unimaginable hardship, one British commander discovered a Bible in his knapsack. As Jesus' light penetrated his darkness, something remarkable happened. The same men who once fought like animals over scraps of food began sharing their portions with the weakest among them.

This transformation clearly illustrates how Jesus' light doesn't just change our circumstances – it changes our hearts.

Today and every day we are faced with a challenge – to what extent are we letting Jesus into our hearts? Are we instead filling that God shaped hole with "stuff"? Are the rooms of our lives being filled with rocks, feathers, or earthly treasures? What fears are holding us captive? Are we searching for rest in all the wrong places?

Remember the third son – he didn't need to strive. Sometimes the simplest solution is the most powerful. Turn to Jesus, the Light of the World. Not only was He there with us in our beginning but He is with us now in the daily working out of our lives and He will be there at our end. He is not a God who is afar off, or One who needs our constant grovelling in order to please Him. Rather He is the Alpha and Omega – the beginning and the end, the God who always has been. He entered our fallen world, He knows what it means to be in pain and struggle, but He is also the One who supplies us with grace and who has triumphed over darkness and all evil.

At the end of the Book of Revelation are found the words "Come Lord Jesus!" Let this be the cry of our hearts as we seek to live with Him and for Him.

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, we invite Your light into every dark corner of our lives. Reveal what needs to be exposed, cast out our fears, and grant us Your perfect rest. Help us stop trying to fill our emptiness with temporary things and instead let Your light fill every space. Amen.

## Hymn / Song HFTC 28: Amazing Grace

*(Lyrics: John Newton, Tune: Arranged by John Barnard)*

1. Amazing grace! How sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found;  
Was blind, but now I see.
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed.
3. Through many dangers, toils, and snares,  
I have already come;  
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.
4. The Lord has promised good to me,  
His Word my hope secures;  
He will my Shield and Portion be,  
As long as life endures.
5. Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,  
And mortal life shall cease,  
I shall possess, within the veil,  
A life of joy and peace.

## Offering

## Community Time

## Prayers of Intercession

Loving God we come to You just as we are ... We thank You that You know us through and through.

**Let Your light shine in our hearts and dispel all darkness.**

We pray for our families and those closest to us ... Thank You that You know what they need ... We pray for Your grace to touch them.

**Let Your light shine in their hearts and dispel all darkness.**

We pray for those in need in our local community whether it be socially, mentally or physically ... Let them know they are loved.

**Let Your light shine in their hearts and dispel all darkness.**

We pray for all those who are affected by wars and inhuman acts ... Come into our hurting world, Lord

**Let Your light shine and dispel all darkness.**

**Amen**

### **Hymn HFTC: Now Thank We All Our God**

*(Lyrics: Martin Rinkart (1636); Translator: Catherine Winkworth (1858))  
Tune: J. Cruger (Nun Danket)*

1. Now thank we all our God  
with heart and hands and voices,  
who wondrous things has done,  
in whom his world rejoices;  
who from our mothers' arms  
has blessed us on our way  
with countless gifts of love,  
and still is ours today.
  
2. O may this bounteous God  
through all our life be near us,  
with ever joyful hearts  
and blessed peace to cheer us,  
to keep us in his grace,  
and guide us when perplexed,  
and free us from all ills  
of this world in the next.
  
3. All praise and thanks to God  
the Father now be given,  
the Son and Spirit blest,  
who reign in highest heaven  
the one eternal God,  
whom heaven and earth adore;  
for thus it was, is now,  
and shall be evermore.

## **Benediction**

Go forth into the world believing that you have been touched by Almighty God today. He is shedding abroad His love and light into your innermost being. Walk with an open heart and know that He is always with you.

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore.**

**Amen**      (sung)

Acknowledgements: some material for this service was sourced from *Worship at Hand*

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