



Kaurihohore Historic Church

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Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish

Sunday 20 October 2024 – Pentecost 22

The service this morning has been prepared 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.

Love: we are committed to selfless love to all, including those marginalised by society and the wider church.

Call to worship:

We rejoice in the grace of worship.

We come willing to accept and include.

We rejoice in the fellowship of worship.

We come willing to welcome and share.

We rejoice in the quiet of worship.

We come willing to pray and listen.

We rejoice in the challenge of worship.

We come willing to hear the prophetic word and prepare for action.

Source: David Sparks (Responsive Prayers Year B)

Opening prayer

There are days, O God, when we feel far from your presence.

We long for you, yet we feel no response, no closeness.

Give us the strength to cry out in pain, speaking our truth.

Give us the courage to complain, even when there is no response.

In the emptiness, we long for your presence.

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

We wait, O God, for you.

We know that you are the source of all mercy and grace.

We trust that you will help us in times of need. Amen

[Hymn: Take my life and let it be \(HFTC 554\)](#)

Hymn: Filled with awe we come before you (Protest of Praise, [Tune: Nettleton](#))

1. Filled with awe we come before you,
God of mystery and might,
and our certainties grow cloudy
calling us to faith's dim sight.
Shake us out of small convictions
or a god we can explain;
give us glimpses of your glory
that no vision can contain.
2. Where your holiness surrounds us,
light that hallows and reveals,
no more can we hide in shadows
all the dirt the dark conceals:
words that injure, thoughts that
mangle,
acts that sidestep love's demand.
We, O God, are broken people
and we scar your holy land.
3. Touch our lives, O God of mercy,
with your burning coal of grace.
Burn away oppression's structure;
build up justice in its place.
Then when we discern together
what you call us all to do,
Move our words and works to
answer:
"Here we are, we follow you!"

Lord's Prayer:

Please use whichever translation or language you feel most comfortable with

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.**

Scripture reading:

Job 23: 1-9, 16-17

I'd like to suggest we consider complaining as a spiritual practice. This might sound a bit strange, but it's definitely not something new, as we saw in Job.

Complaining to or about God invites us into uncomfortable territory. It gives us permission to struggle not just with our circumstances, but with God himself. Complaining is an honest cry of, or on behalf of, a suffering soul who knows it's not supposed to be this way!

Kaya Oakes says about complaining: Done in a group as a form of release, it can be healing. Done to God in prayer, it can lead to clarity. Done in literature, it can create characters we cleave to as readers, our literary kin. Done in excess, it can toxify an environment or lead to a habit of lording it over those much less powerful than we are.

Soon I'm going to give you space to put complaining into practice. Kimberley's going to come up and read to us complaints from some of the psalms of lament. I'll then read a short poem by Jay Hulme, then after that a song will play. During this time, I invite you to complain. You can do this however you wish, you could use the pen and paper in the pews to write down some complaints you have; you could share your complaints with someone you trust. It's up to you. We'll then finish with a prayer of complaint.

Here are some questions to help orient you during this time.

1. What complaints or questions have you been hesitant to voice to God?
2. What has been holding you back from being completely honest with him?
3. Where are the cries of Job and the Psalmist echoed today? It might be in our own lives, or in the lives of those in our community, in our world.

Contemporary reading: [The Antidote for Loneliness \(Jeff Chu, Notes of a Make-Believe Farmer\)](#)

Scripture readings: Psalms 10:1; 22:1-2; 77:7-9

Poem: Addressing the Backlog (Jay Hulme, *The Backwater Sermons*)

There are acres of filing cabinets
on the edges of Heaven, filled with:
Why, God, Why, God? Why?

Because is not an answer,
nor, God admits, is it *the* answer –
but what else can They say?

[Song: Within Our Darkest Night \(Jacques Berthier\)](#)

Prayer of complaint

A final quote from Ellen Davis: the book of Job hints at a strange truth that is never explained, and probably cannot be explained: the full admission of pain opens the door to hope.

Job appeals for justice in search of God. The cries of our world echo the Psalmist's lament of God's seeming abandonment. Our questioning and protests presume God is hearing. With that in mind, I'm going to lead us now in a prayer of complaint.

During this prayer there'll be a time of silence where you can bring the complaints you've been pondering, those situations of injustice and pain, to God.

Let us pray:

Father, we come humbly before you now in complaint.

With the psalmists, we cry out, "Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?"

And, "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?"

Jesus, life is hard. We struggle, with our pain, and sometimes with you.

Holy Spirit, help us humbly bring our complaints before you now.

Help us name specific situations and specific circumstances, in our own lives and in the lives of others, that are painful, wrong, or unjust.

Silence

Father, we lay our pain before you.

We lay our honest, pain-filled questions before you.

Our frustrations with you.

We know that you're not only able to hear, but able to handle our pain, our self-pity, our blame, and our fears.

We know that you're able to intervene, yet we do not understand why you have not.

God we complain that you feel distant. Remote. We fear that you're no longer helping, that you've for some reason hidden yourself in this time of trouble.

Where are you, Lord? Will you forget me forever?

Amen

[Hymn: O love that will not let me go \(HFTC 486\)](#)

Offering prayer

Receive, O God,
not only our gifts of money
but our heartfelt commitments
to a more generous and equitable world.
In the receiving,
grant us your blessing and courage
for living in Jesus' way. Amen

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: Come, O long expected Jesus \(HFTC 52\)](#)

Blessing

Today we finish with a blessing from Jeff Chu, the first line of which he mentioned at the beginning of our contemporary reading earlier this morning:

Life can be so lonely. Life can feel so hard.
May you know the deep respite of companionship. May you sense the immense relief of ease.
Some days are little more than a long trudge through an endless valley.
May you find a shady spot in which to rest.
Some nights vibrate with worry, anxieties ricocheting through your brain.
May you fall into the soundest slumber, with only the sweetest of dreams.
People ask, "What's wrong?" There's no good answer, or none that you wish to share. May you know the comfort of silent solidarity and the care of those who need no details.

You wish it made sense—whatever “it” might be—but sometimes it just doesn’t. May you encounter peace in holy unknowing, and may you feel loved through it all.

Source: Jeff Chu (<https://jeffchu.substack.com/>)

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