



Kaurihohore Historic Church

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Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish

Sunday 3 November 2024 – All Saints Day

The service this morning is led by Kimberley 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.

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

*You are invited to stand if you are able,
for the hymns and the offering prayer*

Welcome

Kia ora and welcome to church this morning. My name is Kimberley, and I am one of the lay preachers here at Kaurihohore. On Friday it was All Saints Day, in the words of Nadia Bolz-Weber, “the feast day when the church recognises how thin the veil is between life and death and remembers that the church includes all who have gone before us and are now glorified and all who will follow and are yet to be born.” During our first song you will have the opportunity to light a candle in remembrance of loved ones, but first please join me in our call to worship.

Call to Worship

In Luke's gospel, Jesus called together the disciples and a great multitude to a level place. There he touched, healed, and taught. There he spoke, "Blessed are...". There he named the blessed—the saints of the faith.

O God, call us together as you did those so long ago to discover your blessed people.

Today, in this place, Christ gather us.

Let us remember, confess, celebrate, and embody the blessed saints of God. Christ, come among us. Alleluia!

Opening Prayer

In all our weakness and strength, with our youth-filled spirits and aging bodies,
we come to be your people, O God.

Strong in faith and eager with questions, singing our praise and whispering our prayers,
we come to be your people, O God.

Filled with saintly determination yet mindful of our human limitations,
we come to be your people, O God.

Made strong in your endless love for us, we know ourselves to be yours and
we come to be your people, O God.

May we truly become your people today. **Amen.**

Candle Lighting

I want to begin this morning by lighting 3 candles:

- The first is to symbolise those who have attended our church in the past – our founding members, past ministers, parish councils, and faithful attendees whose volunteer hours, contributions, and place in our community have made our church what it is today.
- The second symbolises those who currently attend our church, the people here today, those who serve on the various teams it takes to make our church run smoothly, those whose presence make us who we are.
- The third and final candle is to symbolise those who are in our church's future. The ones who will carry on the dreams and visions we begin during our time here, and also bring about new, exciting, and sometimes difficult changes as our church continues to serve God, each other, and our community.

While All Saints Day is about remembering those in our church community, it also goes much wider than that – we also remember the faithful of the past, those we have known and loved, who have shaped our lives and our faith. There are also those who we may not have known personally but have shaped the faith of the world we belong to. We affirm even though we no longer see their faces, we know they are present in the legacies they left behind.

During this next song, you are invited to come forward and light a candle from one of the three already lit in memory of those who have shaped your life and faith. You may also like to pray for people or situations which need care, love, healing, compassion or justice.

We remember those we love who have left us in recent times, including:

- Essie Mundy
- Lloyd Moorman
- Michael Deverell
- Pam Trewhella
- Pat Watson
- Wayne Davison
- Beverley Nielsen

Hymn – [Great is Your Faithfulness](#) (HFTC 260)

*You are invited to come forward
to light a candle in memory of a loved one while we sing.*

Blessing for Life after a Loss

*from The Lives We Actually Have: 100 blessings for imperfect days,
by Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie*

Blessed are you, who feels the wound of fresh loss.
Or of a loss... no matter how fresh... that still makes your voice crack all
these years later.
You who are stuck in the impossibility of it. Frozen in disbelief.
How can this be? It wasn't supposed to be this way.
Blessed are you, fumbling around for easy answers or quick truths
To try to make this go down easier.
You who are dissatisfied with the shallow theology and trite platitudes.
Blessed are we, who, instead, demand a blessing.
Because we have wrestled with God and are here.
Wounded. Broken. *Changed.*
Blessed are we,
Who keep parenting,
Who keep our marriages and friendships and jobs afloat,
And who stock the pantry...
Because... *what choice do we have*
But to move forward with a life we didn't choose
With a loss we thought we couldn't live without?
One small step. One small acts of hope at a time.

Contemporary Reading – Saint Grandma: The Story of Venerable Suzanne Aubert, by Joy Cowley

If you are interested in reading more about Suzanne Aubert,
Whangarei Libraries has the following books available to borrow:

- The Story of Suzanne Aubert, by Jessie Munro
- Never Let Go! The Remarkable Story of Mother Aubert, by Patrick Marie Rafter
- Letters on the Go: The correspondence of Suzanne Aubert
- The Calling, by Fleur Beale (fictionalised story in which Suzanne Aubert plays a role)

Hymn – Psalm 67 (<https://psalms.seedbed.com/psalm-67/>)
(Tune: Aurelia)

1. May God be gracious to us, and bless us from above,
Make His face shine upon us, with all His cov'nant love;
So that Your ways, O God, may be known in all the earth,
And Your salvation known by all peoples of the earth.
2. May all the peoples praise You, O God, may peoples praise;
May all the nations sing and be glad for all their days.
For You will rule the peoples with justice by Your hand,
And You will guide the nations in each and ev'ry land.
3. May all the peoples praise You, may peoples praise and sing.
The earth will yield its harvest, and will its produce bring.
And God, our God will bless us; yes, God will blessing send,
And all the earth will fear Him to its remotest end.

Reading – Ephesians 1:15-23

Food for Thought

I thought I would begin this morning by talking about the origins of our church, those saints who have come before us, laying the foundations that helped make our church what it is today. Who were these people, where did they come from, and how did they end up here at Kaurihohore?

That story all starts with one man - Reverend Norman McLeod. He was born around 1778 – there is no official record of his birth or marriage – and it's thought that he was born in Sutherlandshire, Scotland. There is a lot of uncertainty and folklore around his early life, and some of the accounts I read reported different things, but it is believed that he had some sort of religious conversion in his early 20's. He dabbled in a few different religious groups, before enrolling in the University of Aberdeen in 1807, graduating in 1812. He then studied ministry at the University of Edinburgh for 2 years, before withdrawing from his studies, complaining that his teachers were too worldly and hypocritical.

From there, he taught at a couple of schools in the Scottish Highlands run by SPCK, the Society of the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. Teachers for SPCK also doubled as lay preachers, but in each place, he antagonised local ministers and landlords by criticising their theology and personal conduct. He was part of a group of lay preachers known as “the men”, who saw the established church as too liberal, and preached that people return to the principles of Knox and Calvin.

His fervent preaching drew large crowds away from churches and he was eventually relieved of his positions.

He then spent time working as a fisherman in Wick, before emigrating to Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia was similar to Scotland in that he drew large crowds with his preaching, but also made a lot of enemies by criticising the ungodly ways of the townspeople where he was living. He was also sued for libel by a local minister, and was fined £250. By this time, he has a group of followers known as Normanites, together they build a ship, 'the Ark', and set sail for the United States, with the intention of settling in Ohio. The ship gets blown in to St Ann's harbour on Cape Breton Island during a storm, and the fishing is so good, that they decide to stay and settle there instead. In St Ann's McLeod becomes the local preacher, teacher, and magistrate, and contemporary observers credit the success of the settlement to him. It appears that during their time in St Ann's the Normanites do a lot of farming, commercial fishing and trading and McLeod ends up owning a series of seagoing vessels. He decides to complete his religious training so that he can perform marriages and is ordained by the Presbytery of New York in 1828.

At this point in McLeod's story, Te Ara the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, adds: "Always combative when it came to religion, he wrote a book characterised more by long-winded attacks on his enemies than by any coherent theology."

For all his faults, McLeod was obviously charismatic and a skilled orator. In the early 1840's his church had seating for 1200 and was overflowing every sabbath.

In 1847 St Ann's gets hit by potato blight and wheat rust, and the people there begin to starve. McLeod gets a letter from his son, Donald, who at this point is living in Australia, Donald raves so much about the climate and conditions that many people living in St Ann's decide to emigrate. To undertake this journey, the Normanites built their own ships, prepared food, and settled their affairs before setting sail on the 5+ month expedition. In the end, two vessels brought approximately 300 people to Adelaide in 1851 and 1852. By the time the second ship had arrived, the people from the first ship had moved to Melbourne.

They arrive at the height of the Australian goldrush and discovered that good coastal land is super expensive. However, they've already sold one of their boats and are trapped, resorting to live in Canvas town just outside of Melbourne where they are surrounded by violence, crime, and disease. Sadly, there is a typhoid epidemic, which kills a number of their community, including 3 of McLeod's sons. Wikipedia says that at this point McLeod believed that the Old Testament prophesy of plague and pestilence as punishment for worshipping false gods was coming true.

Realising that Australia isn't the paradise they were hoping for, McLeod then writes to Governor George Grey asking if land is available in New Zealand where he and the Normanites can settle. The first group arrive in September 1853, and a year later they begin to settle on allotments up the Waipu river. As word travels back to Nova Scotia that they have found a place to live and build their

community, four more ships then make their way to New Zealand – Gertrude (1856), Spray (1857), Breadalbane (1858), and Ellen Lewis (1860). More than 800 people took part in that migration, representing 19 Scottish clans, many of whom settled here at Kaurihohore, claiming land under the Forty Acres Scheme. Among them were my great-great-grandparents, John and Ann McBeth, and their firstborn, Farquhar, only 4 days old when they set sail on the Ellen Lewis. The people on these other 4 boats were not Normanites, but Free Church Presbyterians, which was very close in theology. It is said that families who did not have their own copy of the bible were not allowed to sail from Nova Scotia.

Once in New Zealand, McLeod focuses more on providing spiritual guidance to his followers and providing an economic base for his family, rather than seeking new converts. He doesn't teach, or work as a magistrate. In his defence, he's now around 80, he's outlived his wife and at least 3 of his children, he's probably really tired. He is something of a controversial figure in New Zealand history, earning a reputation as an autocratic demagogue for his public tongue-lashings of wayward parishioners. He was an outspoken critic of women's extravagance in dress, and it's said that he once publicly scolded his wife during a sermon because she dared to wear a ribbon.

While all that makes me fairly certain the he and I would not have seen eye to eye, others see him as a caring pastor and defender of the weak. One of his contemporaries wrote, 'His nature and temper were very mysterious, often almost clashing with each other. One side was mild and lovely as could possibly be while the other was autocratic as could be'. Another account of him reads, McLeod was a "wonderful man. There was an aloofness about him that made him a wonder to many... people looked upon him as almost divine. His influence on them was marvellous. They were most obedient to his commands."

Jane mentioned to me that there are some people who look now at Norman McLeod and wonder if he was on the autism spectrum. This may help explain his black and white thinking, adherence to rules and structure, and strong reactions when perceiving that people had stepped outside the "right" way of doing things.

Like him or loathe him, "McLeod's uncompromising sense of moral righteousness committed him to guide his followers personally and to ensure that they could live together in material comfort and religious freedom." Norman McLeod died in Waipu, on 14 March 1866.

So, how does all this link to Kaurihohore and specifically this church? As I said, many of the families who arrived on the later 4 ships ended up here in Kaurihohore, and they were the ones who built this church – the first community building in the area. Before the church was built, they would walk to Whangarei Heads once a month to hear McLeod preach, leaving home on Saturday night and arriving back on Monday morning. I wonder what they would make of the fact that I have a similar attendance rate, but live less than 10 minutes' drive away!

It is believed that McLeod only visited here to preach once, but his influence was wide ranging, even up to 25 years after his death. On the Sunday's that weren't spent at Whangarei Heads, the sabbath was strictly observed, you weren't even allowed to carry fresh water and remember, this was a time before indoor plumbing! And unfortunately for the children, playing games, climbing trees, whistling, or reading anything other than religious material were all forbidden.

When first built, this building doubled as the local school from 1861-1877. As per the belief that nothing could detract from the attention of worshippers, the church contained no symbols or decoration of any kind. In fact, the cross on the wall behind me was not added until some point in the 1980's and 1990's while Ted Body was minister. It was designed and built using local timber by the late Eric Cosslett, a member of the congregation at the time.

The first minister of the church was John Gorrie, who was inducted in 1862. He preached in Gaelic every Sunday afternoon for more than 15 years, also taking Sunday morning and evening services in Whangarei.

I was really sad to read that, despite the church being built in the early 1860's, communion was not held here until 1888, because many of the parishioners did not feel they were good enough to participate. For a church that now has a theology of inclusion and celebrates an open table, believing that anyone is welcome to participate in the Lord's Supper, this feels... heartbreaking.

And I think that is what has really struck me over the past few weeks as I've read and reflected on our roots – the humanity of sainthood – we can now look back and say, they got some stuff right, and some stuff wrong. I also firmly believe that if the founders of our church could look forward and see us now, they wouldn't be thrilled about some stuff either – women in the pulpit, banners on the walls, open and inclusive theology.... Likewise, while we are making the best choices we can right now, chances are, there will still be occasional mistakes. 150 years from now, the people who attend this church in whatever form it exists, will look back at us, with the benefit of hindsight, and with a sizeable cultural divide, and say “they got this right, but I'm not sure about that.”

This is beautifully explained up by Nadia Bolz-weber in her book 'Accidental Saints: Finding God in all the Wrong People' when she says, “What we celebrate in the saints is not their piety or perfection but the fact that we believe in a God who gets redemptive and holy things done in this world through, of all things, human beings, all of whom are flawed.”

May God bless our participation in God's redemptive and holy work, despite all our human flaws. Amen.

For more information about Rev Norman McLeod, the mass migration he inspired, and/or life in early Kaurihohore see the following websites,

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman_McLeod_\(minister\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman_McLeod_(minister))
- <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1m39/mcleod-norman>
- <https://waipumuseum.com/genealogy/migration-map/>
- <https://www.kaurihohorehistory.org/>
(note this website is a work in progress as it is still being developed)

Hymn – God make us Agents of Joyful Rebellion (Protests of Praise)

1. God, make us agents of joyful rebellion
called to resist sullen empires of fear,
fueled not by hatred but love for all people,
we stand united, assured you are here.

2. Some will be Marys who sing down injustice.
Others like Moses will speak truth to power.
Few, like brave midwives, will shield life from evil.
All must be prophets awake for this hour.

3. Laughing in answer to snarling derision,
we dance to counter oppression and pain.
Feasting together despite our divisions,
we pledge ourselves to Christ's upside-down reign.

4. God, make us agents of joyful rebellion
called to sing out till our faith is made sight.
Fueled by the stories of saintly subversives,
we stand united, your justice our light.

Offering Dedication

ONE: Give as the saints give and gave.

ALL: We will give after reflection and prayer. We will give with compassion; we will give with generosity; we will give sacrificially. We will give to support those in the faith community. We will give to support those in our neighbourhood and far beyond.

ONE: And God will bless your giving.

ALL: Amen.

Prayer for the People – written by Jeff Chu

God of the heartbroken,
Where are you?
Be with the children who cry out.
Be with the mourners and the grievors.
Be with the frightened and the weary.
Be with the thirsty and the hungry.
God, come near.

God of justice,
Where are you?
Obliterate our apathy.
Grow our empathy.
Bolster our solidarity.
Turn us toward goodness.
God, come near.

God of abundant life,
Where are you?
Move us to forsake violence.
Make us people of healing and care.
Lead us out of fear and hatred.
Guide us along the path of peace.
God, come near.

God of steadfast love,
Where are you?
Soften human hearts.
Grant us courage and vision.
Give us spirits of mercy and hope.
Show us the way to mutual flourishing.
God, come near.

Hymn – [Be Thou my Vision](#) / Lord be my Vision (HFTC 545)

Scots Gaelic Version - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UknBXcrAYTM>

1. Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
be all else but naught to me, save that Thou art;
be Thou my best thought in the day and the night,
both waking and sleeping, Thy presence my light.
2. Be Thou my Wisdom, be Thou my true Word;
be Thou ever with me and I with Thee, Lord;
be Thou my great Father, and I Thy true son,
be Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

3. Be Thou my Breastplate, my Sword for the fight;
be Thou my whole Armor, be Thou my true Might;
be Thou my soul's Shelter, be Thou my strong Tow'r,
O raise Thou me heav'nward, great Pow'r of my pow'r.

4. I need no riches, nor earth's empty praise:
you my inheritance through all my days;
all of your treasure to me you impart.
high King of heaven, the first in my heart

5. High King of heaven, when battle is done,
grant heaven's joy to me, bright heaven's sun;
Christ of my own heart, whatever befall
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Blessing

May Christ who makes saints of sinners,
who has transformed those we remember today,
raise and strengthen you that you may transform the world;
Go in peace.

Sung Amen x3