



Kaurihohore Historic Church

P O Box 4118, Kamo, Whangārei 0141



Kaurihohore / Kamo Co-operating Parish Sunday 8 October 2023 –Pentecost 10

Our Service today has been prepared by Rev Freddy De Alwis

Welcome

Sentence: How clearly the sky reveals God's glory! How plainly it shows what he has done! Ps 19:1.

Call To Worship & Prayer:

(please share in reading together the phrases in bold type)

The Lord is my shepherd; I have everything I need.

Like a shepherd who leads the flock;

Jesus guides and encourages the people of God.

Like a shepherd who cares for the sheep;

Jesus is a friend to the lonely and down-hearted.

Like a shepherd who calls for the lost sheep;

Jesus calls us home and gives directions to the lost.

Seeking direction, needing nurture,

longing for relationship,

encouraged in the journey of faith,

We come together to worship God. Amen.

Hymn HFTC 260: [Great is Your Faithfulness, O God my Father](#)

Community Time: Celebrations and Notices

Prayer of Confession & Healing:

Silence...

Hear the confession of your people most gracious God,
for our hearts are heavy with the knowledge of our sin.
A worldwide humanity who does not treat your creation
with respect, care or compassion-
taking for granted the resources with which our world is blessed;

Lord of creation, we ask your forgiveness.

As those who sometimes do not care for each other
in the way that you care for us;
as a humanity which chooses to live in opposition to itself,
denying basic human rights to so many,
because of a difference in skin colour, race, religion or gender.
as people whose apathy overwhelms their creativity;

Lord of creation, we ask your forgiveness.

As those who jealously guard their personal faith, not sharing it with others;
as a people who accept only those whose faith is the same sort as ours;
as those who disregard any spirituality other than our own;

Lord of creation, we ask for your forgiveness.

God waits patiently for us.....

God listens carefully to our confessions.....

God says simply to us: In Christ your sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Hymn HFTC 40: [Praise to the Lord, the Almighty](#)

J. Neander (1650-1680)

Bible Readings: (Psalm 104:10-15,18, 20, 21)

You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
they flow between the hills,
giving drink to every wild animal;
the wild asses quench their thirst.

By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation;
they sing among the branches.

From your lofty abode you water the mountains;

the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.

You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,

and plants for people to use,

to bring forth food from the earth,

and wine to gladden the human heart,

oil to make the face shine,

and bread to strengthen the human heart. ...

The high mountains are for the wild goats;

the rocks are a refuge for the coney.

You make darkness, and it is night,

when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.

The young lions roar for their prey,

seeking their food from God

Second Reading: Matthew 21: 33-40

Sermon: “Climate Change and the Stewardship of Creation”

- Is global climate change a sign of the end times and the coming of Christ?
- Is it a scientific fiction that a Christian God would never allow?
- Is it a challenge that Christian teachings compel its followers to confront?

As this is the season of creation, I would like to focus on “**the stewardship of creation**” that’s a theme found in Mt 21 – the renters of the vineyard. If we take the second creation story in Genesis 2 as about living in a garden, Mt 21 is a good parable about caring for it. And also Psalm 19, and Ps 104, Isa 5:1-6. This parable was a **reminder about ownership**. We do not own the vineyard; we are trustees or stewards of it.

The earth, air, water and food we receive as a gift from God, for every human being to use it wisely and sustainably, and pass it on to the next generation.

Background: Just in order to get to the subject - the word, “**The Environment**” what does it mean?? It means **whatever surrounds us** or is outside us. Is it a correct understanding of the world??

But the truth is contrary to this understanding. The world/creation around us is also within. We are an expression of the creation; creation is an expression of us. We are made of it; we eat, drink, and breathe it. **Read Gen 3:19**, And someday, when the day comes, we will each return to the earth. Earth is the bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.

We have to admit that no one can ever understand the “**holy mystery of creation**”, the point I want to make is that the word “environment” does not carry the real meaning of God’s creation.

1. **Anthropocentrism** = A human-centred perspective

It is a fact that so much anthropocentrism has emerged through the influence of the Bible, and so many arguments are there to justify the human-centred perspective, Gen 1 and Ps 8, just to mention few. With this (wrong) understanding of the will to dominate the earth, Gen1:26b -28, Ps 8:6, begins with an understanding that humans are radically different from everything else in creation. It assumes that there is an unbridgeable gap between humans and the rest of creation.

Is it possible to think that this kind of understanding of theology has led the Church over the years to interpret scripture to undergird such theological positions and even to interpret biblical words such as “dominion” and “subdue” to abuse God’s creation.

2. **Creation is the place of God’s presence**

Many religious traditions, mainly Judaism and Christianity, believe and understand the indwelling of God within the whole creation. Creation is the place of God’s presence. **God is “home” here, as we are.** The Greek word earth and home is **Oikos**! The first and basic meaning of oikos is simply “Habitat Earth.” Oikos – earth as a vast but single household of life - means the capacity for survival, that is, sustainable habitat. **It means space** and the means for the living of all living things. Without adequate hospitable habitat, nothing lives. Not only humans, but all life-forms need carefully fitted habitats.

The same creation story says that God saw the other creatures were good, quite apart from human beings, indeed, before there were any human beings. In Psalm 50:9-12, ***For every wild animal of the forest is mine, the world and all that is in it is mine....*** Actually human beings are closely related to, and even dependent on non-human creatures. This point is presented beautifully in Psalm 104, especially in verses 27-30, which is a liturgical parallel to the Genesis creation story.

Jesus in the NT says that God cares for even the ravens “they neither sow nor reap” (Luke 12:24) and clothes the lilies (Luke 12:28) which invites us to see in creation the sacrament of God’s hidden presence and experience all things as part of God’s creation.

So God creates and **protects** the whole of God’s creation and **indwells, accompanies, participates** and **delights** in them. I am convinced that similar insights can be drawn from Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Islamic scriptures. In fact the delicate design behind the whole of God’s creation, convinces that nothing is accidental!

This foundational fact - that we all need a fitted space for us to live – right to live, is the one great element of “democracy” in life. **More than two thirds of the world is crying for this space and democracy.** That is an echo of the crisis we are faced with. There is a group of people call “Rohinjiya in Myanmar” just over 700,000 women and children..... No country...

Whatever we choose to call it, the point is that all living beings, including animals **need a space, a productive land, forest, an hospitable atmosphere, safe water and clean air.**

3. **When we talk about creation as the place of God, I am not talking about “Pantheism” God and creation equal in scope - Pantheism**

In the Christian tradition there is a fear that this kind of theology will lead people to venerate matter and that is condemned by the Church as a heresy, and that heresy is named **Pantheism**. Pantheism is described in terms of making God and creation equal in scope, that the universe is God and God is the universe.

To overcome the issue of Pantheism, Christian tradition has insisted on God’s **transcendence**, recognizing that God may be present within creation but cannot be reduced to creation. On the other hand, Christian tradition also talks about the **immanence** of God, meaning that God can be found within all creation. There are several biblical texts to justify these positions.

Conclusion: Look at the beauty and the scientific balance behind the whole of God’s creation that tells us that nothing is accidental.

In spite of this knowledge and awareness, the planet earth is under threat and according to Romans 8: 18-25, the whole creation is groaning.

What a mess we humans have made of God’s beautiful world! Pollution, forests wiped out, species of animals vanishing due to human actions, green-house gas CO2 damaging the thin ozone layer, climate change, imbalance of weather pattern and hundreds of years of tribal warfare which still continues to destroy our world even today. What a mess we’ve made of God’s beautiful creation.

I would like to conclude with **Psalm** 19, it begins with how clearly the sky reveals God’s glory! How plainly it shows what he has done! and how we can understand and see God through the creation. Each day announces the following day, yet it is speechless, no voice, no words used, yet their messages go out to the whole world. I see this as a wonderful metaphor. The voice of God then is speechless, yet the words go to the end of the world.

There is a voice in creation, which the wise will listen to.

Intercessory Prayers

Lord's Prayer

Hymn FFS 11: [Come Teach Us](#) - Shirley Murray

(Tune: Richmond)

1. Come, teach us, Spirit of our God,
the language of your way,
the lessons that we need to live,
the faith for every day.

2. Excite our minds to follow you,
to trace new paths in store,
new flight paths for our spirit space,
new marvels to explore:

3. Engage our wits to dance with you,
to leap from logic's base,
to capture insight on the wing,
to sense your cosmic grace:

4. Inspire our spark to light from you,
to catch creation's flair,
new artistry to celebrate,
new harmonies to dare:

5. Delight our hearts to worship you,
to learn compassion's code,
to live in context of your love,
great teacher who is God!

Benediction & Grace

Do all the good you can,
by all the means you can,
in all the ways you can,
in all the places you can,
at all the times you can,
to all the people you can,
as long as ever you can.

(John Wesley)

Go now to love and serve!

We go in the name of Christ!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all forever. Amen.