

St Mungo's Clyde – Parish Service

13 February 2022

GATHERING WITH THE SAINTS

He hōnore he korōria ki te Atua
He maungārongo ki te whenua
He whakaaro pai ki ngā tāngata katoa

Honour and glory to God
Peace to the earth
Blessings to all people

The first greeting is to the source, the energy of life.

The second greeting as we gather is with all the Saints who have gone before us, over the hundreds of years in this place – Kai Tahu and all who settled here from the ngā hou e whā, the four winds. A cloud of witnesses to our gathering and to our lives.

And then – huri noa – we turn to us the living...

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God..

Many: We are each a child of God.

**No matter who we are, or where we are on life's journey,
we are blessed.**

One: Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled.

Many: We come to worship the God who feeds us, who fills us, and who blesses us.

One: Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

**All: Let us rejoice in the love of God,
and worship our God together in prayer, song, and praise.**

UCC USA

HYMN *God comes to us as one unheard* tune [Belmont](#) WOV435

God comes to us as one unheard
in silences profound,
or marvels of a symphony,
sublimity of sound.

God comes to us as one unseen
in beauties of the earth;
a sea-gull's flight, a sunset sky,
the miracle of birth.

God comes to us as one unknown
to share our joys, our pain;
that presence felt, the gift of grace
our peace and hope sustain.

God comes to us at every hour
when strength and faith are weak;
the smiles of friends, encircling arms,
of reassurance speak.

God comes in unexpected ways
surprising us with joy,
reminding that the light of love
no darkness can destroy.

Teach us, O God, to recognise
your spirit everywhere;
make us aware, responsive, keen
your love for all to share.

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PRAYER

One of the texts for today is Jeremiah 17, with these words:

⁷ Blessed are those who trust in the LORD,
whose trust is the LORD.

⁸ They shall be like a tree planted by water,
sending out its roots by the stream.

It shall not fear when heat comes,
and its leaves shall stay green;
in the year of drought it is not anxious,
and it does not cease to bear fruit.

Good encouraging stuff. Interesting though that this verse shortly after is not included in the lectionary: (v.11)

¹¹ Like the partridge hatching what it did not lay,
so are all who amass wealth unjustly;
in mid-life it will leave them,
and at their end they will prove to be fools.

As an old Christian Conference of Asia prayer puts it: *Lord, comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.*

With these things in mind, let us bring our prayers, whatever is in your mind and on your heart right now. May my words be a trigger for your own prayer and for our shared prayer.

God of our wonder,
Heart of creation:
we are blessed when
we feast on your Word:
that Word which embraces us;
that Word which teaches us;
that Word which transfigures us;
that Word which grounds us.
Give us your Word this, and every, day.

Jesus Christ,
Heart of God's children:
we are blessed when
we have your compassion:
that heart for the poor;
for the hungry;

for those who weep;
for those left out.
Give us your heart this, and every, day.

Holy Delight,
Grace's Heartbeat:
we bear fruit when
we overflow with your spirit:
that spirit of generosity;
that spirit of pouring ourselves out in service;
that spirit of bearing another's burden.
Give us your spirit this, and every, day.

God in Community, Holy in One,
may our hearts beat as one with your heart...

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Let's take a moment now with what is troubling us – any sense of inadequacy, failure, loss, hurt – given or received...

Forgive us, Heartbroken God, for thinking we are the centre of your world. Pour your living water into us, so we might send down roots deep into your heart, and so become those people who are blessings to others, as we have received the gift of new life from Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen

SHARING THE PEACE

SYMBOL OF GOD'S PRESENCE

HYMN/SONG *Make me a channel of your peace* (Carole's choice)

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

*Oh, Master, grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand:
To be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope;
Where there is darkness, - only light;
And where there's sadness, ever joy.
Oh, Master, grant that I may never seek...

Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
In giving to all folk that we receive;
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

St Francis (1182-1226)

A STORY [Webster the Preacher Duck](#)

READING [Luke 6:17-26](#) (NRSV) – read by Kay

Invite to hold out hands in blessing to those around you every time you hear the word "blessed"

CONVERSATION WITH THE WORD

Blessed it is to speak from the heart and to the heart

Today's going to be a testimony as much as anything, which is kind of strange given my theological ilk, but then I've learnt a lot from church and churches over the years. I'd like to be sure that *your* testimony, your story of faith in relation to life and the world around, is as much part of it. This is to be a safe place for each of us to be ourselves. Thinking is allowed and thinking aloud is allowed! A place to express even what might be different – there is no "party line" – and to listen and learn from our different stories.

Now, I suspect there are more than a few people present who listen to commercial free radio – RNZ National, Concert FM? And watch TV1?

How have you felt about the change over the last two, three, however many years, as te reo Māori has made itself heard more and more?

Honestly...

Lots of thoughts shared ... great stuff!

My story with languages other than English at church goes back to Ōpoho Dunedin, occasional organist and then also student at the Theological Hall. *Faafetai i le Atua* was a hymn I got to know well. And the Māori and Pacifica singing from the back rows in the Knox Chapel was something else. There would be prayers in the language of the worship leader, at chapel and at Ōpoho. No drama if I don't know what they are praying: God does.

I came here and, if I recall rightly, used to sneak WOV633 Tama ngākau mārie into the hymn list for the Sunday of Waitangi Day. At Methven I doubled the frequency having it also on Pentecost Sunday. It was at Methven that I started language learning, having been bowled over by the beauty of te reo while in Sri Lanka for the Asia Ecumenical Course. There in the midst of the prayers at the opening of the Christian Conference of Asia Assembly was our own language. Sonny Rinii from our Māori Synod gave his support to me to learn from the Correspondence School and the journey began. Study and, ongoing, watching recorded Māori language news *Te Karere* (with subtitles) over breakfast from then (1998) till now.

It was Northland and the many hapū of the Whangaroa district that gave me the real education (and got my pronunciation sorted out – I think they were proud of their project with me). There are a dozen marae connected to the College that I was chaplain with in Kaeo. Kaeo is the historical heart of the parish and weekly services are held there in the church that's a memorial to the first Methodist Mission (1823). I reckon I worked on all of the marae at some point – as te minita Weteriana, the Methodist minister – regularly with many to the point of feeling pretty much at home. I'd occasionally look down at my white legs and remember that I was different! Many hours just being there, listening, sometimes understanding, often not, and doing my bit as requested.

And feeling the richness of an integral aspect of our country I would never have encountered otherwise.

What was most amazing was the graciousness of the people. Their complete embracing and accepting of me, guiding, encouraging, and always expecting me to be back, to be part of them. This total Pākehā from Southland: forgiven all things, challenged in all things. I was (and remain so with those I meet here in the South) teina to their tuakana, younger sibling to Māori older sibling. To be such was my early commitment – it's what is needed to restore the balance of us as two people brought together as one in the spirit of Ephesians 2:13ff.

Now much of what was involved in ministry with whanau and hapū was what I knew as the core of ministry anyway, particularly as a rural minister. It is about *being present*, listening, caring, helping find words to comfort, and words to challenge. And singing! I miss that so much.

The words of the beatitudes were very often in mind in relation to this work, and all of my work across the Kaeo-Kerikeri Union Parish (including the tortuous building projects!). Often used in services and evening prayers on marae, the words come with comfort and with challenge. And most of all they don't believe in staying with the status quo. They are about God's essential shift in power balance to let all the outsiders in and release the insiders out.

Indeed the beatitudes are the core of the faith I was nurtured in – the practical Christianity of my parents and our community. It's what drove me through all those challenges some of you know about, a woman with young children getting to be a minister and then working her heart out in this parish. I think it was George Elder who mentioned something about me maybe being small, but having a big heart. I was very touched by that - it's been a reference point ever since. It helped me never give up.

So, my thoughts: always be on the lookout for those on the outer – that's the beatitudes' task for us. Never settle with "the way things are". And be ready for one's world to expand.

Time for more conversation:

- What speaks to you most in the Beatitudes, looking at this, Luke's, version?
- How might that speak to you in relation to a changing world around us – and a changing church?

...

REFLECTION SONG *Little things count*

This world is full of the biggest and best;
people competing can trample the rest;
some will be hurt in this scramble for gain;
let's do the little things, soothing the pain.
Little things count – a loving touch,

*a hug or smile can mean so much:
help with a problem, when we're in distress,
little things matter, to heal and to bless.*

Little costs little, and yet means a lot,
easing the burdens that others have got;

child-minding, lift to church, cleaning, a meal;
little is wonderful, little is real.

Little things count...

Let's look for little things that we can do;
look for the chances to be kind and true:

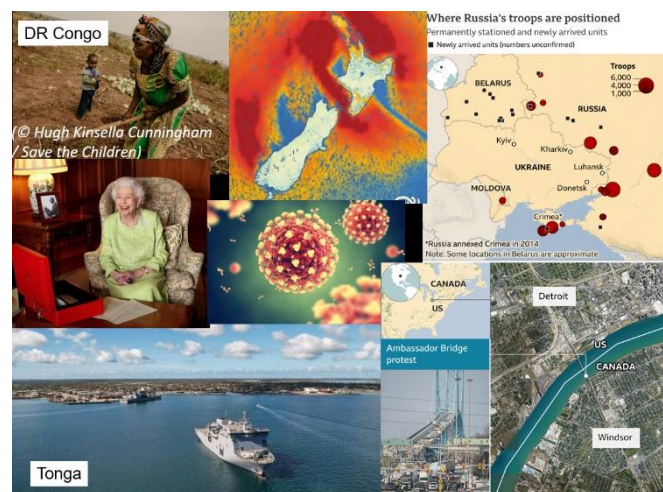
PRAYERS

You opened your heart,
God of every wonder,
and creation flowed forth
transforming chaos into a garden of delights:

trees stretching to touch the sky,
rivers tickling the floors of valleys,
stars twinkling your message of joy
to those staring into space.

Your Spirit of generosity offered
all these gifts to those shaped in your image,
inviting us to picnic by the waters of life.

But we chose to sink our roots
in the sandy clay of sin and death,
taking our places at the scoffers' table.



OFFERING – SERVING IN THE WEEK AHEAD

DEDICATION

Gracious and loving God, who blesses us with so many good gifts, we bring these offerings with the hope of turning tears to laughter, and sorrow to joy. May they truly be a blessing. Amen.

HYMN *Kauri, flax and rata trees*

Kauri, flax and rata trees,
ferns with koru, signs are these
of new life: the Christ has come,
under Southern Cross, warm sun.

*Christ our Lord, be born anew;
shape our lives in all we do.
In this South Pacific land
let your peace and justice stand.*

Land of lakes, and rushing streams,
snow-capped mountains, deep ravines:
teach us all Lord Christ, to be
stewards of this rich beauty.

Christ our Lord...

In this highly favoured place,

God sees our loving in word and in deed;
little is huge to our neighbours in need.

Little things count...

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tune: [The Glory Song](#) (MHB 116 ii)

We step down from that table, and let ourselves be
connected to all that is around us throughout this world –
people, and all that lives and exists on land, rivers, seas,
and skies.

We feel that connection and pray with our world...

Here in this prayerful time,
your spirit flows forth,
your grace, your joy, your peace
seeping and trickling into all gathered,
so we become trees planted by your waters,
sharing your kingdom with the poor,
feeding all who hunger,
wiping away the tears of all who grieve,
lifting up all despised by the world.

make us clear signs of your grace;
break down walls of selfish greed,
justice bring to all in need.

Christ our Lord...

Then shall Jesus Christ* be found
deep in Aotearoa's ground;
mountains, lakes and peoples too,
all will render praise to you.

Christ our Lord...

*In original: 'Christmas here'
tune: [Oxford](#) (Humility) MHB124 NB sung faster than the
recording link!

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SENDING AND BLESSING

Grounded in God's love, we are sent out

to share abundance with those who have so little.

Blessed with Jesus' hope, we go forth

to fill the emptiness of those longing for justice.

Blessed with the Spirit's delight, we dance into the world

**to take the hands of our sisters and brothers,
and gather at the edge of living waters for a picnic.**

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Kia tau ki a tātou katoa

Te atawhai o tō tātou Ariki a Ihu Karaiti

Me te aroha o te Atua

Me te whiwhi-nga-tahi-tanga ki te Wairua Tapu

Āke, āke, Āmine.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

The love of God

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

be with us all. Evermore, Amen.

Robyn McPhail

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