



19 March 2017  
Lent 3

## Welcoming the Stranger – Welcoming the Christ

*“Thinking allowed; thinking aloud allowed”*

**Minister:** Rev Dr Robyn McPhail  
**Musician:** Dave Hallam KK    **Reader:** Arlene Purdie KK

### An Invitation

Today Jessica Scott invites all who wish to stay after the service to share in celebrating her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Kaeo congregation have joined the Kerikeri service today in response to this invitation. Thank you, Jessica, and a huge happy birthday.

### Activity Space at Cornerstone

Young ones, and those who like to do something while they listen, are invited to go to the Children’s Table as they wish.

God of spirit and truth,  
when our buckets are empty and the well is deep,  
you offer us living water.  
Now we will never thirst,  
and we can worship you in spirit and truth,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God for ever and ever.

## Plugging in

### Gathering with all the Saints

#### Symbol of God's Presence

*Hymn There shall be showers of blessing* [choice for Arlene]

#### Prayer

When we were determined  
to remain at war with you,  
you sent the Prince of Peace.  
When our relationship with you  
was lying in pieces on the floor,  
you offered the broken Bread  
to restore us to wholeness.  
When petty pride  
stiffens our necks so much  
we cannot bow down  
in your holy presence,  
you massage our souls  
with grace's tender touch.  
We worship you in joy,  
God, our God.

When our ears become stuffed  
with our selves,  
you open them with songs  
of grateful praise.  
When our mouths overflow  
with rich, sweet wine,

you wash them out  
with living waters of hope.  
When all we can say  
is 'Give me! Give me!'  
you challenge us  
to submit to servanthood.  
We worship you in spirit,  
Jesus, Water Giver.

When our souls are empty,  
you fill them with living water.  
When we are reluctant  
to follow Jesus,  
you steer us in the right direction.  
When we are tempted to boast,  
your whispers of grace silence us.  
We worship you in truth,  
Comforter of our hearts.

God in Community, Holy in One,  
our joy, our truth, our spirit,  
we worship you.

## Clarifying our Purpose

### Conversation with the Word

Exodus 17:1-7 and a story about water in John's gospel

We hear this reading and always seem to go straight away to talking about what they did wrong. A lesson therefore to be gleaned, a lesson in good behaviour and being proper with God.

I wonder. Does that really help where we're likely to be at, particularly when at a pretty low ebb?

It gives me pause too when Paul says in Romans 5 (another of today's options):

but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

God's love poured into the heart through the Holy Spirit seems to me to make it hurt more, not less, harder, not easier. As Thom Shuman puts it:

sorry, paul (Romans 5:3-5)

watching chemo drip  
into your child  
week after week, does  
not produce endurance,  
it wears your soul  
down to a nub; and  
walking by the side  
of your aging parent  
through  
dementia's desert  
doesn't build character,

it erodes your  
heart; and  
though the preachers  
always pontificate  
other wise,  
too many know  
how hope  
trips them and  
leaves them crumpled  
by the side of  
despair.

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### Hymn *Anō he awa/There is a river*

The symbol of water

That is our faith symbol to explore this week. In exploring it we will find it opens up much more than behaviour management in the text from Exodus.

I'll tell you a story you'll probably know well already from John's gospel. John chapter 4. Jesus and his team were in Samaria, and had just reached the town where Jacob's well is located. In the heat of the midday. The disciples went into town for supplies and Jesus sat down for some rest.

A local woman arrived to get water, a bit of a pariah apparently choosing to come to the well at the hottest time of day, when no other women would be present to pick on her. Jesus asks her for a drink, which is something a Jewish man does not do, as she, a Samaritan woman, points out. They get talking about living water, very intelligent talk in fact based on scriptural references that they have in common. He offers her water which would enable her never to be thirsty again and she does not hesitate to accept the offer. She knows she needs it. Water that will become part of her, within her like a spring gushing up.

What follows is a bit of back and forth that brings to the fore what's been going on, or rather going down, for her. Her solo status keeping away from other women is one indicator; an indicator of a troubled and unhappy life, and Jesus' request to bring her husband flushes out the core of it. This is a woman whose life has been serial use and abuse, physical and mental perhaps, sexual abuse pretty well definitely. She's suffering. She's hurting. She's at risk of being completely damaged. That is what Jesus sees, that is what he knows about her and her life thus far. He sees the pain.

And he knows that what she needs most of all is healing.

Healing waters.

Healing waters that flow from Jesus simply out of who he is, and especially who he is in relationship with others. It's this interaction with the woman that's the key to it. His response to her, to her need before anything else. Nothing else matters in the moment but that she is a person with pain.

Let's go back to the wilderness and the grumbling people. They are grumbling because they are thirsty. Not just a bit thirsty: their water has run out and they're parched; they don't know if and where they'll find any more. This is not just behaving badly, but being desperate.

You might say, well, they should have known the Lord would provide. But that's alright for us: we know how the story proceeds. They have no idea. They have no track record yet of generational experience of coming through hard times and it being okay. As slaves, they'd had no childhood experience of coping with challenges – things were as things were. Moses is upset by their reaction, but he's not angry or annoyed. He scared for his safety, because desperation leads to irrational action. That's what he's asking his best mate the Lord for help for.

The response is to deal to the need. Use his Gods given gifts (including his stick) to track down a water source. And to help them learn not to panic as they did, but to trust and keep searching for what's there. To trust what they need is in fact freely given and available, because that's the way life is – in God's world.

No need to grasp. No need to whinge. Identify your need, yes, own up to it. And see it as something that can and will have a solution, a solution in this case that came because Moses was awfully good at listening. Listening at the thin places, noticing the cues, tuned in to the spirit.

What matters first is the suffering: the woman at the well is suffering, the people mentioned in Thom Shuman's poem are suffering, someone you know is suffering, you perhaps are suffering. What's needed is not fast-tracked endurance and somehow magically trusting God will provide whenever. This trust doesn't fast track. Change from a state of suffering or abuse isn't turned into patience and faith by an act of will. It comes after the healing begins, after someone reaches out and responds directly to the pain. That's when it can start. And it can grow as the need is eased and the emptiness filled – at least in part. It may take a long time. The important thing is to offer healing waters., that is to offer love – acceptance and hope.

The “how” of healing is impossible to pin down. But there is one thing I'm sure about, and it's in the Exodus text, the story of Jesus with the Samaritan woman, and it's in the experience of Paul the apostle: it begins with being responded to in terms of what the real need is. Not advice, not correction or behaviour modification, definitely not judgement, but recognising the hurt at the heart, indeed at times the damage at the heart. Recognising this and therefore helping with the task of repair and reconnection.

Here's how it likely is for the Samaritan woman:

The Samaritan woman who meets Jesus has been with many men, who use her up and send her away (4:18). She comes to the well at the heat of the day, presumably to avoid being seen (4:6). After she trusts Jesus, she runs back and proclaims that she's met someone who knows everything she's ever done (4:29, 39). You can almost hear them thinking: “Sister, *everyone* knows everything you've ever done.” But Jesus has uncovered her pain and gazed on it not with judgment like others, but with life-restoring love. She's an honored evangelist now (4:39). A whole community is blessed through her work forever, as her wound is transfigured into joy for her and many (4:40-41).

Jason Byassee, *Sojourners*

**Hymn** *I am part of the pulse of creation*

## Conversations around the Table

### Continuing the Conversation

#### Prayers

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

God, we pray:

crumble the walls that still separate Christians,  
and create a unity, according to your heart and will.  
Accept us as we are, but mold us as you want us to be,  
and help us become the leaven of unity and love  
in our country and around the world.

Zbignevs Stankevičs, the Archbishop Metropolitan of the Roman Catholic Church in Latvia, from: WCC NEWS

#### Lord's Prayer

Sent to Carry Healing and Hope

## Serving in the Week Ahead

In the community ... being Christ-shaped

**Offering and Dedication** *Refreshed by living waters*

### Blessing

Let us go now, to meet all thirsting for God.

WE WILL SHARE THE LIVING WATER WITH EVERYONE WE MEET.

Let us go now, to listen as Jesus does with us.

WE WILL HEAR THE STORIES AND HEARTS OF ALL

WHO ARE CONSIDERED VOICELESS BY OUR WORLD.

Let us go now, to bring the Spirit's wholeness to others.

WE WILL BRING PEACE AND HEALING TO THE BROKEN AND LONELY, EVEN AS THEY OFFER US HOPE AND GRACE BY THEIR LIVES.

Kia tau/The grace

...[singing] *May the road rise to meet you*

### NOTICES FOR TODAY – 19 MARCH 2017

Parish email: [admin@kkup.org.nz](mailto:admin@kkup.org.nz)

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KK Pastoral: Jessica Scott 09 407 5555 [jomscott2@gmail.com](mailto:jomscott2@gmail.com)

### ROSTERED FOR NEXT SUNDAY 26 MARCH 2017

**Organists:** Kato Akau'ola KK, Clyde Foster Kaeo

**Readers:** Lloyd Purdie KK, tba Kaeo

**KK Door and tea:** Akisi and friend

**Flowers:** Mary Fenton

### LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE COMING WEEK:

1 Samuel 16:1-13, Psalm 23, Ephesians 5:8-14, John 9:1-41

**BIBLE STUDY:** Monday 20 March 1.15-3pm in the Cornerstone Meeting Room, focussing on some or all of the readings above. A chance to share responses, hear some of the background, and dig out, and be fed a little for the journey of life.

**TAI CHI CLASSES CHANGE OF DATE:** Wednesday 22nd afternoon (not Tuesday 21st) Tai Chi classes. Classes will return to Tuesdays from 28th.

**PARISH COUNCIL:** Tuesday 21 March at 7.00pm **or earlier** at Kerikeri, following the welcome to Paparangi Pirini

**PŌWHIRI/WELCOME TO NEW CORNERSTONE AMBASSADOR:** The new appointee for the role of "Cornerstone Ambassador and Mission Project Facilitator" (short name "Ambassador") will be at 5pm on Tuesday 21 March in the Worship Area with a cuppa and snack to follow in the Hall. Please bring finger food to share.

**KERIKERI RETIREMENT VILLAGE CHAPEL SERVICES:** Every Sunday at 4.00pm at the Ted Robinson Chapel. Our parish next leads the service (with Communion) on 26 March.

**NEW ENTRANTS:** Heather Hackett asks if we have a couple of people to spend half an hour on a Monday (1.45pm) with 12 new entrants to Riverview Primary School, singing a song and telling a story, after which they have a picture to colour in. Easy peasy as they say, and a lot of job satisfaction. Heather can visit to show what is involved.

**COMMUNION SERVICES:** Kauri Lodge - Friday 24 March at 11.00am Ted Robinson Chapel - Sunday 26 at 4.00pm

**CAR BOOT SALES:** Next sale is **this Saturday** 25 March 7am - 12noon at Cornerstone. Contact Mary 407 1117