



7 May 2017
Easter 4

Welcoming the Stranger – Welcoming the Christ

“Thinking allowed; thinking aloud allowed”

Minister: Robyn McPhail
Musicians: Diane Paterson KK Lorelei Hayes Kaeo
Readers: Jan Gough KK tba Kaeo

Plugging in

Saints cannot exist without a community, as they require, like all of us, nurturance by a people who, while often unfaithful, preserve the habits necessary to learn the story of God.

Stanley Hauerwas

Gathering with all the Saints

“...with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.” - Colossians 3:12-17

There are about 5,400 animal species that make complex, intentional, repeatable, musical vocalizations. That is, there are about 5,400 species that sing. The majority live in the trees, a few live in the oceans, a very few live underground, but there is one—only one—singing species that lives on the ground: us.

Another thing: humans are the only singing species with a precise and shared sense of rhythm, which is what allows us to sing together. Two birds might sing the same song, but they cannot sing it together.

Another thing: if a roomful of people sings at the same time, they start to breathe at the same time as well. Some studies suggest that if the drumbeat or bass line is strong enough, their hearts will begin to beat together, too. And if we're singing together and breathing together and our hearts are beating together, then it's like we're one body. And you know Whose body it is.

Another thing: all the other species stop singing when danger approaches. But humans sing louder the closer the danger gets. We sing together, and we become large, and we do not back down.

So come racism, and "We Shall Overcome" you.

Come fear, for "It is Well With My Soul."

Come war, for tonight is your "Silent Night."

Come death, for "Jesus Christ is Risen Today."

Come, all ye faithful, and *sing*.

Then the writer Quinn Caldwell prays:

Lord, I can't read music and I can't carry a tune in a bucket. But I'm-a sing your praises anyway. Amen

Quinn Caldwell, UCC USA, *Stillspeaking God* Devotional

Hymn *I serve a risen Saviour*

Prayer

Let's pray in the midst of a few words. Be present in this place. Simply let yourself be in the presence of the people, this house of prayer – in the presence of God...

In the laughter of children,
we hear the voice of the Gate of the Way,
and find our way home.

...

In the lap of a parent,
God's compassion cradles us
in the still waters of love.

...
The Shepherd of our lives
leads us through that door
into life with him forever.

...
We are baptized with living waters
which refresh us, restoring us
to follow Jesus all our days.

...
The Holy Spirit, Keeper of truth,
is the Light which guides us
through every shadowed moment.

...
The Breath of life stills our worries
and fears, as we are lead to that
peaceful place of God's heart.

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... So be it. That is, the people say, AMEN.

Symbol of God's Presence

Hymn *The Lord's my shepherd* [Jan's choice]

Clarifying our Purpose

Conversation with the Word

Gatekeepers or Gateways

Or is it more a matter of how you “keep” the gate? Keep, watch, care for, tend ... all words that go with “shepherding” whether we’re a literal shepherd or someone who is good at the responsibilities we sang about in Psalm 23.

John 10:1-10

Do you remember the long story in John’s gospel about the man who had been born blind. We had it a few weeks back and listened to Walter Brueggemann’s take on it. This section follows directly after it, picking up a key concern in that story. Leaders behaving badly, that is, leaders using their power to control and hold onto status quo arrangements. Not showing the life-giving and enabling kind of leadership that shepherds are a prime example of. The gatekeepers have locked the gate. It’s got a key pad and you can only get in if you’ve got access to the code.

The gate keepers have become imposters to their original (God-given) role. True gatekeepers are gate-openers. Going in and out of the presence of God, enabling everyday ordinariness to intermix with glimpses of holiness (thin places) which is just part of being human and crucial to being fully who we can be as human. Leadership that controls and regulates shuts off this free movement. In effect it sets conditions for privilege. In our time it’s not so much religious merit that has centre focus for people, but there is a privilege which have or don’t have, depending on how we fit the recognised code. Leadership – the people we put in positions of respect – controls by way of the social and economic code we’ve taken to be the rules for good life. This is the gate that you only get through if you behave properly and measure up financially. If you’re worthy of being in the fold of good people.

God’s presence is not social acceptance or approval. God’s presence is not financial wealth or self reliance. It’s not any kind of achievement to our own merit as a human individual. God’s presence is simply there waiting for us when we’re on the other side of the gate, the fold we go out from and come back to in the course of our journey called living.



And the gatekeeper is a person who is ready and willing to open up so people can return and go out without constraint. The gatekeeper needs to be a gateway.

Jesus says he is the gateway. He gives himself, his whole self for the sake of the world. That's being a gateway: opening the way to the presence of God. And it sets a pattern for us being gateways to God's presence. Opening a space so that others can step in and out as they are moved to do.

This kind of open space can be described in different ways. Or rather not described – that's too hard to do – but pointed to. "The middle of the air" is one evocative phrase. Clearly space free of any constraints and blockages like closed and locked gates present. Going to meet God, to meet Jesus in the middle of the air has a long history in music, in the blues, gospel, and spirituals, and musicians like Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan, and Led Zeppelin. The songs speaks of people going to meet Jesus *in the middle of the air*.

A recent song turns this on its head, just as Jesus, being God's presence, God with skin on, turns things on their head. It is God calling us – *come and meet me in the middle of the air*. That is, the song expresses God's desire to meet us. Like Psalm 23, God's desire is our presence. The life-giver, the Spirit-breather wants to be with us. True, wants us to live our regular human life, venturing forth and getting involved totally with everyday, practical, material things, yet wants us to keep returning to home base. Keep returning to the place of spirit peace, of restoration, of re-energising. The ultimate place to be.

Conversations around the Table

Reflection Song sung by Eddie Perfect and Tripod

I am your true shepherd
I will lead you there
Beside still waters
Come and meet me in the middle of the air
I will meet you in the middle of the air

I will lay you down
In pastures green and fair
Every soul shall be restored
I will meet them in the middle of the air
Come and meet me in the middle of the air

Through the lonesome valley
My rod and staff you'll bear

Fear not death's dark shadow
Come and meet me

With oil I shall anoint you
A table shall I prepare
Your cup will runneth over
Come and meet me

In my house you'll dwell forever
You shall not want for care
Surely goodness and mercy will follow you
Come and meet me ...

Oh, come and meet me in the middle of the air

Paul Maurice Kelly

Continuing the Conversation

The World: Our Prayers

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle: India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

Gracious God, you care for me; I need nothing more.
HEAR THE CRY OF THOSE WHO ARE HUNGRY;
HUNGRY FOR JUSTICE, AND DIGNITY,
HUNGRY FOR FREEDOM, AND LOVE.
You lead me into a haven of peace and rest.
HEAR THE CRY OF THOSE WHO ARE ALONE;
THOSE WHO GRIEVE A RELATIONSHIP BROKEN BY DEATH
OR BY HUMAN FAILING,
THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE ISOLATION OF A HOSPITAL ROOM,
A PRISON CELL, A FRAIL BODY, A CONFUSED MIND.
You breath new life into me and lead me in new ways.
GOD WHOSE BREATH IS LIFE ITSELF,
WE PRAY FOR A JUST AND CARING USE OF YOUR CREATION;
A FAIR SHARING OF ITS ABUNDANCE,
AN ETHICAL SEARCHING OF ITS MYSTERIES.
You are with me, and comfort me,
even when the darkness of the world looms large.
WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO SEEK THE TRUTH;
THOSE WHO CANNOT SPEAK,

AND THOSE WHO CANNOT BE HEARD,
THAT THE LIGHT OF YOUR WORD MAY SHINE IN THE DARKNESS
WHICH OVERSHADOWS THEIR LIVES.

In the face of those who trouble me
you provide for me, and pour out your blessings.
HEAR THE CRY OF THOSE TRAMPLED
BY RACIAL OR RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE,
DISORIENTED BY HOMELESSNESS,
DEFEATED BY UNEMPLOYMENT;
God of justice and compassion you are with me always
and have promised to sustain me all my life.
ENLARGE OUR VISION OF LIFE,
AND MAKE US BOLD IN OUR HOPE,
CREATOR, CHRIST, AND HOLY SPIRIT,
LET OUR CRY COME TO YOU;

...prayer book prayers

. . . and with the saints in every age we pray,

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A Contemporary Lord's Prayer

Dear God,
closer to us than our own hearts
farther from us than the most distant star.
You are beyond naming.
May your powerful presence become obvious
not only in the undeniable glory of the sky,
but also in the seemingly base and common
processes of the earth.

Give us what we need, day by day,
to keep body and soul together
because clever as you have made us,
we still owe our existence to you.

We recognise that to be reconciled with you,
we must live peacefully and justly
with other human beings,
putting hate and bitterness behind us.

We are torn between our faith in your goodness
and our awareness of the evil in your creation,
so deliver us from the temptation to despair.

Yours alone is the universe
and all its majesty and beauty.
So be it.

Jim Berkio 2012 adapted

Sent to Love the World as God Loves

Serving in the Week Ahead

Offering Hymn *First set your mind* WOV635

Dedication

Blessing

May the God who shakes heaven and earth
whom death could not contain
who lives to disturb and heal us,
bless you with power to go forth
and proclaim the gospel

... Kia tau/The grace ... Amen

Janet Morley

NOTICES FOR TODAY – 7 MAY 2017

Parish email: admin@kkup.org.nz

Church Office at Cornerstone: 09 407 8250

Minister: Robyn McPhail (DD) 09 283 4802, 021 0247 6280

minister@kkup.org.nz

Find us at www.kkup.org.nz and on [Facebook](#)

Notices: Jenny Phillips 09 407 8883 jenny.jane@xtra.co.nz

KK Pastoral: Jessica Scott 09 407 5555 jomscott2@gmail.com

ROSTERED FOR NEXT SUNDAY 14 MAY 2017

Organists: Marie Cannon KK, Lorelei Hayes Kaeo

Readers: Ros Simpson KK tba Kaeo

Door and tea: Helen and Jenny (Door) Rilla and Jenny (tea)

Flowers: Jenny and Karen

Communion Prep: Jenny and Ros

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE COMING WEEK:

Acts 7:55-60, Psalm 31:1-5,15-16 1 Peter 2:2-10, John 14:1-14

KERIKERI SINGERS: Practice following service today at 11am

BIBLE STUDY: tomorrow Monday 8 May 1.15-3pm in the Cornerstone Meeting Room. All welcome to come and check it out.

GOD'S KIDS AT CORNERSTONE: Dedicated session for younger ones during church **next Sunday 14 May**, then on 28 May, 11 and 25 June. Pass the word around any families you know. Next week: learning about eating together, everyday and our special meal called Communion. Adults welcome (helpers always good value!)

GIRLS BRIGADE PEN PALS: Are you interested in being a Pen Pal with a Girls Brigade girl between the age of 8-13 years old? This will involve the girls writing to you, and then you writing back, once every 3-4 weeks. Then at the end of term 3 (end of September) meeting up with your pen pal for afternoon tea and some activities, which we will organise. If this sounds like something you would like to do, then please contact Renee Webster on 4074396 or 021973538 by 25 May.

GIRLS BRIGADE SUPPORTERS MEETING: At Cornerstone, Thursday 11 May—5pm—After GB. A quick meeting with all who are interested in supporting Girls Brigade, to let you know what is coming up for term 2 and where we would appreciate some help. We aim to establish a Supporters Group to share the leader's load, to do the best for the girls. Even if you can only help for a very short time to clean up afternoon tea, or help clean up at the end of the night, every little bit helps. We would appreciate seeing you all there !!

CORNERSTONE ALARM: The building has an alarm system which the person unlocking the building needs to disarm, and do the opposite when locking. If you need to get access and are not comfortable with this process, there is always another way of doing things – another person or phoning Robyn to get it disarmed, or armed, remotely. Please don't hesitate to ask for help.

CAR BOOT SALES: Next sale is **this Saturday 13 May** 7am - 12noon at Cornerstone. Contact Mary 407 1117 re assisting etc.

IN CORNERSTONE THIS WEEK: Sunday: Sunday Ensemble pm Monday: Bible Study pm. Tuesday: Yoga am; Tai Chi pm Learning Hub pm Wednesday: Tai Chi pm; Learning Hub pm. Thursday: Girls' Brigade pm. Friday: Hangi Bro am; Saturday: Car Boot Sale am; Healing Event pm

Hosts: Monday – Michelle, Sue; Tuesday: Jessica, Mary; Wednesday – Michael; Thursday – Jenny, Sue; Friday – Michelle. *Paparangi and Robyn also present at various times.*

AT KAEO CHURCH HALL THIS WEEK: Monday: yoga pm; Thursday: Puna Awhina am; Community Information Hui pm