



16 July 2017

## Welcoming the Stranger – Welcoming the Christ

*“Thinking allowed; thinking aloud allowed”*

**Minister:** Robyn McPhail  
**Musicians:** Dave Hallam KK      Clyde Foster Kaeo  
**Readers:** Bob Tayler KK      tba Kaeo

When there is no enemy within, the enemies outside cannot hurt you.

Winston Churchill

## Plugging in

### Gathering with all the Saints

God spoke flowers and herbs and grass and trees into being.  
 God spoke greens of a hundred shades.  
 COME AMONG US, GENEROUS GOD.  
 God spoke laughter and peace and joy and grace into being.  
 God spoke delight of a hundred kinds.  
 COME AMONG US, GENEROUS GOD.  
 God spoke caring and comfort and mission and hope into being.  
 God spoke love in a hundred ways.  
 COME AMONG US, GENEROUS GOD.  
 God spoke us all into being  
 to be the good soil of God's coming realm.  
 COME AMONG US, GENEROUS GOD.

**Hymn** *Morning has broken* WOV91

### Prayer

Farmer God,  
 your words of life are cast upon the earth  
 with a generous hand and a hopeful heart,  
 into places where it will grow easily and abundantly;  
 into places where it will struggle to put down roots,  
 and into places where it risks being trampled or destroyed.  
 May your word take root in our lives  
 as we grow deeper in your way  
 and bear the fruit of justice, right relationships, and love.

Imagine the Divine Gardener  
 bending over the field of your life.  
 See the attentive love on the gardener's face,  
 rest in the assurance that  
 this Gardener wants your life to bloom in beauty.  
*(Pause.)*

What do you need to flourish?  
 Tell God where you are weak and in need.  
*(Pause.)*

Speak with God about  
 that which is chocking your faith out.  
*(Pause.)*

What good things does the Gardener see  
 growing in your life?  
 Give thanks to God for these gifts.

(Pause.)

There is no judgment on us  
for we are rooted in Christ Jesus.  
The law of the Spirit of life  
has set us free from that which leads to sin  
and death.  
Let our roots go deep into God's love  
as we grow in the grace of Christ Jesus,  
and are nourished by the Spirit of life.

### Symbol of God's Presence

Hymn *For all the saints* WOV384 [Bob's choice]

## Clarifying our Purpose

### Conversation with the Word

In the background to the conversation today, or rather at its roots, is the familiar parable of the sower and the seed. Scattered wherever seed will land, be it the pathway (easy access for birds), rocky ground (hard to get established in little or no soil), weed infested soil (choking any new shoots), or good soil producing a bumper plus harvest. Jesus key message in its original context is in his closing words: *Anyone who has ears, listen up!* Will people be listeners? Will people be recipients of the seeds scattered freely and generously by God the Gardener, or will they stick with what they are already?

With that in the background what do you hear Paul say in this letter to the Christians in Rome?

Romans 8:1-11

What's been assumed Paul is talking about, what he was likely talking about, and what relates to our challenges as human beings

the law of sin and of death  
weakened by the flesh  
sinful flesh  
condemned to sin in the flesh

What do those phrases conjure up for you? Do you cringe with the thought of what might be said about them?

*To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.*

By the way, the word "sex" is not mentioned here. When I think of the the church teaching that has promulgated the idea that whenever flesh and sin are being talked about it's sex that is the problem, methinks they did protest too much! Whose problem was it?

Whatever past preaching experience for you, the English word "flesh" is a bit problematic, given the residue of disdain for bodies that can still linger. The split between body and soul, or body and mind, goes a long way back. It is not biblical but it took hold of Western thinking once Platonism dominated church interpretation, with women identified with body and men with mind or soul.

In his letter to the Roman Christians, Paul uses two Greek words, *sarx* and *pneuma*, to distinguish two aspects of being human. *Sarx*, still translated "flesh", despite it not being in contemporary language usage, would best be understood as finiteness – the fact we're limited to a point in time and space. Stuff (star-dust) with boundaries, with limits to where we are and when we are. *Pneuma* is the aspect that breaks through limits, reaching for the infinite, and is the unbounded aspect of being human. If we go back to the picture of Yahweh God shaping a creature from the top-soil and breathing into it, we have this same sense of two aspects, inspired body, or embodied spirit. It just depends what way you are looking at it.

Paul's focus in this text is on what goes wrong when you run with the finite aspect only, the stuff, and forget about the inspiring, enlivening breath. It is in fact deadly to think of us only as a body machine, nothing happening unless it is made to happen by something, or someone, other than ourselves. We are not billiard balls. Rather, we're self-activating, self-operating, organic. And we operate best under the influence of inspiration and imagination. We thrive on new possibilities, new ways of seeing things and doing things. Most of all, we're never to be doomed to what the world would push us to do and be.

Here's how Eugene Peterson interprets it, in a way that is relevant to our culture and context. Now it does take a lot of words to unpack it.

1-2 With the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah, that fateful dilemma is resolved. Those who enter into Christ's being-here-for-us no longer have to live under a continuous, low-lying black cloud. A new power is in operation. The Spirit of life in Christ, like a strong wind, has magnificently cleared the air, freeing you from a fated lifetime of brutal tyranny at the hands of sin and death.

3-4 God went for the jugular when he sent his own Son. He didn't deal with the problem as something remote and unimportant. In his Son, Jesus, he personally took on the human condition, entered the disordered mess of struggling humanity in order to set it right once and for all. The law code, weakened as it always was by fractured human nature, could never have done that.

The law always ended up being used as a Band-Aid on sin instead of a deep healing of it. And now what the law code asked for but we couldn't deliver is accomplished as we, instead of redoubling our own efforts, simply embrace what the Spirit is doing in us.

5-8 Those who think they can do it on their own end up obsessed with measuring their own moral muscle but never get around to exercising it in real life. Those who trust God's action in them find that God's Spirit is in them—living and breathing God! Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life. Focusing on the self is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God, ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores who God is and what he is doing. And God isn't pleased at being ignored.

9-11 But if God himself has taken up residence in your life, you can hardly be thinking more of yourself than of him. Anyone, of course, who has not welcomed this invisible but clearly present God, the Spirit of Christ, won't know what we're talking about. But for you who welcome him, in whom he dwells—even though you still experience all the limitations of sin—you yourself experience life on God's terms. It stands to reason, doesn't it, that if the alive-and-present God who raised Jesus from the dead moves into your life, he'll do the same thing in you that he did in Jesus, bringing you alive to himself? When God lives and breathes in you (and he does, as surely as he did in Jesus), you are delivered from that dead life. With his Spirit living in you, your body will be as alive as Christ's!

Anyone who has ears, listen up! Be receptive. Don't close up and have a life that's just what comes at you. Open up and loosen it, and let all the goodness within you break out and blossom.

**Hymn** *In the bulb there is a flower*

## Conversations around the Table

### The World: Our Prayers

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle: Djibouti, Somalia

screen: *Liu Xiaobo, Turkey one year from squashed coup, wintry weather NZ, Trump jnr and Russia*

...our prayers...

God of abundance,  
you have planted seeds within our hearts;  
seeds of ...

*pause to think of what has grown and is growing in us...*

... *think too of the seeds sown in us of compassion, right relationship, justice, kindness, faithfulness, prayerfulness...*

Thank you for these gifts of faith  
and we pray they will take root in our lives.  
Where compassion has been planted,  
help us to bear good works and service.  
Where kindness has been planted,  
help us to bear gentle thoughts and deeds.  
Where justice has been planted,  
help us to bear a striving for fairness.  
Where mercy has been planted,  
help us to bear forgiveness.  
Where joy has been planted,  
help us to bear spirit-filled laughter.  
We consider the seed you have planted in each one of us and pray for it to bear fruit in our lives.

O GOD, YOU HAVE PROVIDED THE SOIL AND THE SEEDS  
AND WE ARE THE BLOSSOM AND THE FRUIT.  
HELP US TO BE YOUR FAITHFUL FRUIT IN THIS WORLD.

### Lord's Prayer

**Sent to Love the World as God Loves**

### Serving in the Week Ahead – Offering

**Song** *We shall go out with joy*

### Blessing

Leader: God has sown seeds in our hearts:

Left side: seeds of compassion,      Right side: seeds of justice,  
Left side: seeds of hope,              Right side: seeds of grace.

Leader: God has sown seeds in our minds:

Left side: seeds of truth,              Right side: seeds of vision,  
Left side: seeds of clarity,          Right side: seeds of wisdom.

Leader: We are the soil; in us are the seeds;  
WE ARE THE BLOSSOM; WE ARE THE FRUIT.  
LET US GO OUT. THE WORLD IS WAITING!

Kia tau ki a tātou/The grace ...

... *A-men, a-men, a---men*

Robyn McPhail, 16.07.2017

### NOTICES FOR TODAY – 16 JULY 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 23 JULY 2017

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

**Readers:** Lloyd Purdie KK      tba Kaeo

**Door and tea:** Lorraine and Brian KK      **Flowers:** Joan Jurisich KK

### LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE COMING WEEK:

Genesis 28:10-19a, Psalm 139:1-12,23-24

Romans 8:12-25, Matthew 13:24-30,36-43

**GOD'S KIDS AT CORNERSTONE:** Projects are available every Sunday at the children's table. Next dedicated session will be **next Sunday** on 23 July.

***Material for next newsletter due this week. Your contributions are welcome, or suggestions of stories to tell.***

**KERIKERI SINGERS:** Practice at 11am following service today

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:** tomorrow Monday 17 July at 11am in the Cornerstone Meeting Room.

**BIBLE STUDY:** tomorrow Monday 17 July 1.15-2.45pm in the Cornerstone Meeting Room. Anyone who wishes to join can come!

**PARISH COUNCIL** this Tuesday, 18 July, 7pm at Cornerstone

**CAR BOOT SALES:** Next sale is **this Saturday 22 July** 7.30am-12noon at Cornerstone.

**IN CORNERSTONE THIS WEEK:** Today: Ensemble pm. Monday: Finance Committee am; Bible Study pm. Tuesday: Carers' Education am; Yoga am; Tai Chi pm, Parish Council pm, Yoga pm. Wednesday: Tai Chi pm. Thursday: Real Estate Auction am. Friday: Early Childhood Workshops pm, Saturday: Car Boot Sale am.

**AT KAEO CHURCH HALL THIS WEEK:** Monday: Yoga pm. Thursday: Puna Awhina am.

**FOOD BANK:** We would appreciate large plastic super market bags for packing please, and also wine boxes. Contact Jenny

**PUBLIC READING WORKSHOP:** a short session for people who read in church or at other small to medium sized public events. This week **Tuesday 18 July**, 10am (start with a cuppa) in one of the small rooms at Cornerstone. Help share the load of things we do as church.

**CORNERSTONE GARDEN GROUP:** The Garden Group are requesting donations (\$20 or other of their choice) for shrubs to plant up the garden leading up to the Peace Garden. This is the next stage on the landscaping plan and we will continue planting along the bank between Cornerstone and the Funeral Parlour as finance permits. There is a box for donations in the foyer.

**BIBLE IN SCHOOLS** at Riverview needs more teachers and helpers for 5 yr olds Mondays, 1.30-2.15 starting on Monday 24 July. Please phone Heather 4077265, or chat to a Bible teacher at your church. We would love you to sit in and observe/help to start with!

As "Open Home" for the community we make space for groups by tidying away our chairs. Each group then sets up as they need and returns everything as they find it. Those able to help with this rather physical task are invited to stack chairs **in piles of maximum six** following the service, **leaving them** to be put in place with the trolley. Don't be concerned if this is something you need to leave to others.