



27 August 2017

Welcoming the Stranger – Welcoming the Christ

“Thinking allowed; thinking aloud allowed”

Minister: Robyn McPhail
Musicians: Diane Paterson KK Clyde Foster Kaeo
Readers: Arlene Purdie KK tba Kaeo

Plugging in

Gathering with all the Saints

Hymn Simply to be, to be in stillness,
 simply to trust that God is here,
 simply to know the Holy Presence,
 is to be blessed: so am I blessed.

Simply to hold the given moment,
 simply to lay concern aside,
 simply to let the heart be speaking,
 is to be blessed: so am I blessed.

So am I blessed within God's keeping,
 so am I freed from pointless stress,
 steadied to feel the soul replenished,
 given this grace, given this grace.

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Prayer

In mystery and grandeur we see the face of God
 IN EARTHINESS AND ORDINARY WE KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST
 In heights and depths and life and death
 THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS MOVING AMONG US

Dorothy McRae-McMahon

We gather to give thanks:
 for the stillness that renews,
 and for the striving that drives us onward;
 for the resting in grace, by a lake with a book,
 and the blessed unrest that fashions new futures;
 for the deep peace of being here and now,
 and the wrestling with what's past
 for the sake of tomorrow.

We give thanks that the whole of it
 is held together by the one we call
 the Christ,
 that the peace and the struggle of our lives
 is not in vain,
 but is an offering of love
 to this unfolding story of the universe
 that we are telling with our lives.

Bruce Sanguin, *If Darwin Prayed*, p.117

Without defences we come before you,
 ready to know who we are
 and open to the light of your presence.
 WE ARE NOT THE PEOPLE WE WOULD LIKE TO BE
 FORGIVE US AND HEAL US, O GOD

.....

Do not be afraid.
There is no condemnation
for those who trust.
Let God be God.
Rise up and live in freedom and hope.
In the name of Christ
AMEN.

Dorothy McRae-McMahon

Symbol of God's Presence

Hymn Breathe on me, breath of God, fill me with life anew
that I may love what thou dost love,
and do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, breath of God, until my heart is pure,
until with thee I will one will, to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, breath of God, till I am wholly thine,
until this earthly part of me glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, breath of God, so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life of thine eternity.

[Arlene's choice] WOV320

Clarifying our Purpose

Conversation with the Word

'Scripture is like a river,
broad and deep,
shallow enough here
for the lamb to go wading,
but deep enough there
for the elephant to swim.'

Gregory the Great (540-604)

Wade or swim, your choice. Whichever way, let this story be like water surrounding you, flowing by you or drawing you in, chilling you or refreshing you. What do you hear, just listening to the story?

Exodus 1:8–2:10

You'll remember the back story, I think. Neville dealt with a key part of it last week: when Joseph (who was sold as a slave by his brothers because he was a spoilt brat, etc. and then rose to be the chief of Egypt's economy) forgave his brothers and settled all their families in the Egyptian land of plenty.

Now he's forgotten. The descendants of Jacob are a threat to law and order. (Like Scots among the English some centuries back – they might side with France.) But the economy needs them, providing as they do such a strong labour pool. It's vital that they are kept under control or national prosperity will be at risk.

This story is the opening episode of the origin of the people called Israel. Once they were just a collection of families. From that they turned into a crucial but feared labour force for an economic empire. How on earth then did they become a cohesive group called God's people? A community endeavouring to journey together God's way? More on that as the story proceeds in the next weeks.

Becoming a people in their own right, a community of shared purpose and values, begins in today's episode, with five women and a baby boy. Remember that. The most important points in the Bible's narrative are about little people. People who on standard terms are insignificant. They stand apart from the dominant culture's value system; they have no power within the ruling system; they have no power of that sort, but they have all the power in the world of God's sort; they could be you or I.

They, the women at this point (we have to wait for the baby to grow up to see his characteristics), are apart from the power system and in their powerlessness seem to have no trouble standing apart from its value system. Or rather no-value system. Surely we can't call "values" an approach that discards human lives for the sake of economic needs?

Is this starting to sound political? I hope so. You really need to think this through for yourself – not my ideas or my politics. Think what it is saying to our situation and our choices to conform or not to what we're told.

Compassion rules in the actions of each of the “little people” in this story. They “fear God” as the text puts it. It’s not essential that they are female, but that seems to help, because as female they can’t help but be more or less sidelined. (That’s changed a lot, but far from completely, entirely equal and with reciprocal participation.) So compassion rules more readily it seems when there is little or nothing to lose. In contrast there’s a lot to lose when the economy of the nation relies on you and your efforts.

Another way of seeing it is their non-cooperation. Shiphrah and Puah’s non-cooperation with evil. In the story it is clear to us that it is evil. Killing babies. Our challenge is to see evil when it is not so obvious, because it’s not in a story from a nation and culture multiple centuries ago, but evil because human life is risked for the same reasons, for the sake of maintaining power and economic security.

What’s happening now that is effectively like drowning our babies in the river?

What are we letting happen, or not believing anything can be done, and children die as a result?

Oh well, say the general population of Egyptians, that’s how it is for Hebrew children. They’ve not got much chance of a decent life; they’ll be poorly educated just like their parents; they’ll soon be addicted to drugs; a number of them will end up in jail. There’s nothing we can do to change it. It’s the way things are.

It’s the way things are. The status quo. The best we have and at least we know where we fit. To be different would be to risk uncertainty, and change to our circumstances.

The midwives decided to risk it. Security of work became irrelevant to them when that work officially required them to go against their own essential nature. Against their very humanity.

Moses’ mother decided to risk it. Her risk included a high chance that her baby would die anyway. She just knew that, if she took mother-instinct’s way and held onto him, he would definitely die.

Moses’ sister (we presume it could be Miriam who is named later) risks something too – danger to herself as a girl-child in a culture of power and abuse, and the possible horror of watching something awful happen to her brother.

And Pharaoh’s daughter. Hers is a great risk also. And perhaps she’s the closest to us. The one behind “enemy lines”, an insider to the benefits of the system, but yet she hasn’t sold her soul. She hasn’t lost touch with her essential humanity which means compassion rules in the moment.

What does God want to do through you?

The sins of racism, misogyny, homophobia and bigotry--and religious extremism of every kind--seem to take on new life in each generation, and the roll call of terrorist attacks sweeps over us like a tidal wave. There is also everyday injustice, especially toward people of color and people who are poor, systemic injustice that does not often inspire demonstrations but really ought to. (Someone has properly called poverty and economic injustice "violence in slow motion.")

Can we ignore the cries of children whose mothers are torn from them and deported? Can we turn away when refugees seek the same safety and deliverance Moses needed so long ago, when children are escaping the flood of hunger and deprivation that makes their parents so desperate that they send them away to another land--one that will not receive them? Are we able to share "good news" in a world where children in countries torn by war are starving (consider what is happening in Yemen) and people are being executed for their religion, their sexual orientation, their hope for a more just world?

Kate Huey Matthews, http://www.ucc.org/weekly_seeds_defiance

We can add examples closer to home. From what is happening in New Zealand. The situation for many families in Northland. And who will vote? Will the people slaving in our brickworks? Will young people believe their voice will count? For future’s sake #ffsVote2017.

Who are we encouraging to have their voice heard, risking as we do that it might be a different viewpoint to our own?

Who are we encouraging to find their voice by telling us what they truly think and want to happen in this country? Them telling us and us listening and considering...

Reflection Song [Where else can we go?](#) by Malcolm Gordon

A song based on John 6. Looking at the tragedy of human 'progress' and the need for humility and surrender to a God who promises to bring a Kingdom that will look after the lost, the last and the least.

Conversations

Continuing the Conversation

- Who are "small" people who do big things that transform situations?
- Who might be "Pharaoh's daughter" today?

The World: Our Prayers (ask children to start coming back)

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle: Cape Verdé, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal

O God, as we look at our world
we are overwhelmed by its need.
But, in the face of that,
we ask for peace and justice in

As we look at our country
we long for leadership
which has integrity;
an end to violence and racism
and a new spirit of community.

As we look at our church
we hope for a humble face
turned with love to the world
and a brave witness to your grace.

As we look at ourselves
we know our need of more energy,
more vision, more love for each other
and a deeper commitment
to live as the people of the Gospel.
Come to us in your life and power.
For you, O God, are the source of all
that is good and beautiful
and we believe you are for us.

Dorothy McRae-McMahon

Learning from the Children

Lord's Prayer

Sent to Love the World as God Loves

Serving in the Week Ahead

Offering Hymn

God the creator, you in love made me
who once was nothing but now have grown.
I bring the best of all my life offers;
for you I share whatever I own.

O Christ the Saviour, you in love called me
who once was no-one lost and alone.
I pledge to go wherever you summon,
making your will and purpose my own.

O God the Spirit, you in love move me
who once was nowhere and felt unknown.
I know my need of you for companion:
all things can change when not on my own.

And with the people summoned to gather
to be the church in which faith is sown.
I make my promise to live for Jesus
and let the world know all are God's own.

Dedication

Receive these gifts, O God
BLESS THEM THAT THEY MAY BE WISELY USED
FOR YOUR WORK IN THE WORLD.

Blessing

Go in peace
and may the Holy God surprise you on the way,
the gospel of Christ be always real for you,
and the Spirit be your breath of life.

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

Robyn McPhail, 27.08.2017

NOTICES FOR TODAY – 27 AUGUST 2017

Parish email: admin@kkup.org.nz

Church Office at Cornerstone: 09 407 8250

Minister: Robyn McPhail (DD) 09 283 4802, 02102476280

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 3 SEPTEMBER 2017

Musicians: Kato Akau'ola KK Clyde Foster Kaeo

Readers: Imago Inocente KK tba Kaeo

Door and tea: Rilla and tba KK **Flowers:** Karen and Jenny

LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE COMING WEEK:

Exodus 3:1-15 Psalm 109:1-6,32-26,45b

Romans 12:9-21 Matthew 16:21-28

GOD'S KIDS AT CORNERSTONE: Special session for Children **today** in the Tamariki – Children's Room.

KERIKERI SINGERS: Practice today at 11.00am after morning tea following the Service

COMMUNION SERVICE: Today Sunday 27 August at 4.00pm at Ted Robinson Chapel

BIBLE STUDY: tomorrow Monday 28 August 1.15-2.45pm in the Cornerstone Meeting Room. Anyone who wishes to join can come!

KAEO HOME GROUP: Monday 28 August. Contact Alan 405 0688

KERIKERI HOME GROUP: Friday 1 September contact Michelle 401 8644

PARISH ANNUAL MEETING: Sunday 8 October, parish service at **10.30am** at Cornerstone, with meeting and lunch to follow.

ANNUAL REPORTS: due **Monday 4 September** (it's closer than you think!). Parish Council, Women's Groups (including annual accounts statement), Children and Youth, Girls' Brigade, Home Groups, Bible Study, Worship, Music, Pastoral, Kaeo Property, Church House, Cornerstone Management, Property Planning Group, Car Boot Sales, Finance (including Envelopes). Please email to admin@kkup.org.nz

PARISH COUNCIL NOMINATIONS: Forms available at each venue.

IN CORNERSTONE THIS WEEK: Today: Ensemble pm. Monday: Chair Fitness am; Bible Study pm. Tuesday: Yoga am; Tai Chi pm, Learning Hub pm, Staff farewell pm/evening; Yoga evening. Wednesday: Learning Hub pm; Yoga evening. Thursday: Kiwi Bee Team Meeting am and pm; Girls' Brigade pm, Counsellor pm; A Choired Taste evening. Friday: Counsellor pm; Home Group evening.

AT KAEO CHURCH HALL THIS WEEK: Monday: Supervised access am; Yoga pm. Tuesday: Business Focus Group pm. Wednesday: Supervised access am. Thursday: Puna Awhina am. Friday: Supervised access am.

CAR BOOT SALES: Next sale is Saturday 9 September 7.30am-12noon at Cornerstone. Contact Mary 407 1117.